

## GCC reviews security, boycott

DUBAI (R) — Gulf Arab leaders held talks on Tuesday on security arrangements in the region but did not finalise plans to triple a joint defence force, officials said. "The leaders also discussed the security issue from all its angles including developing the Peninsula Shield (joint force)," Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General Sheikh Fahim Ben Sultan Al Qasbi said after talks in Riyadh. Sheikh Fahim said the issue had not been finally approved. The Emirates News Agency (WAM) quoted him as saying. The GCC leaders discussed the Arab boycott of Israel and the possibility of maintaining it, sources at the 14th summit said. A decision by the leaders on whether to maintain the sanctions would be announced at the proper time, the Omani News Agency quoted Sheikh Fahim as saying. He provided no other details. But summit sources said GCC foreign ministers had recommended their countries abide by an Arab League decision stating that the lifting of the embargo depended on a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement.

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### King, Assad exchange views

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday contacted Syrian President Hafez Al Assad over the phone and exchanged views with him on various international and regional issues, particularly the latest developments in the Middle East peace process.

The two leaders stressed the need for Jordanian-Syrian coordination to unify positions vis-a-vis the peace process in the context of support for a unified Arab position and Arab causes and rights, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

In Damascus, meanwhile, President Assad and Syrian President Elias Hrawi held talks.

Mr. Hrawi and Mr. Assad were co-chairing the first session of the two countries' joint supreme council.

Also present were Syrian Prime Minister Mahmoud Al Zuhri and Parliament Speaker Abdel Qader Qaddoura, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri.

### Two Shiite guerrillas killed in Lebanon

SIDON (AFP) — Two guerrillas from the Shiite militia Amal were killed Monday in fire-fights with Israeli soldiers and their surrogates the South Lebanon Army (SLA), Amal said in a statement here. Pro-Syrian Amal fighters attacked an SLA position at Alman Shumayyeh, in the centre of the Israeli "security zone" in southern Lebanon, with automatic weapons, anti-tank rockets and mortars, Amal said, triggering a fire-fight. An SLA spokesman had earlier said two of its men were hurt in an engagement at Tallus in the western sector of the "security zone." Israel on Sunday attacked the Hizbollah militia in southern Lebanon.

### Hungarian parliament approves cabinet

BUDAPEST (AFP) — The Hungarian parliament Tuesday accepted former Interior Minister Peter Boross as prime minister, and adopted his government programme with a 201 to 152 majority and five abstentions. Mr. Boross, 65, is to replace Jozsef Antall, who died Dec. 12 at age 61 of heart failure following lengthy treatment of lymphatic gland cancer. The vote, broadcast live on Hungarian television, needed a single (50 per cent plus one vote) majority, or 192 "yes" votes in the 385-strong legislature.

### Sinn Fein seeks talks with Britain

BELFAST (R) — The president of the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) political wing called Tuesday for direct talks with Britain and Ireland on what he called contradictions in every element of their Northern Ireland peace plan. "There is a need for direction and unconditional dialogue if we are to move forward on all these issues," Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams told his first news conference since the plan was unveiled last Wednesday. Mr. Adams complained of ambiguities "on every issue involved," in the package of constitutional principles British Prime Minister John Major and his Irish counterpart Albert Reynolds launched six days ago.

### Lockerbie attackers must be brought to justice — Clinton

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The Libyans accused of blowing up a U.S. airliner over Scotland five years ago must be brought to justice, President Bill Clinton said Tuesday at a groundbreaking for a memorial to the 270 victims. "On this day five years ago Pan Am Flight 103 was torn from the sky over the hills of Lockerbie, Scotland," Mr. Clinton said. "Our nation will never stop pursuing justice against those who caused it," Mr. Clinton said.

## Israel, PLO meet again amid reports of compromise deal

PARIS (Agencies) — Israel and Palestinian negotiators were to meet in Paris late Tuesday for talks to overcome differences blocking Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

French foreign ministry spokesman Richard Duque, quashing earlier reports the talks might be held outside the capital, told reporters: "I definitely say Paris."

The Palestinian delegation was headed by Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee member Yasser Abed Rabbo who said before leaving Tunis that his Israeli counterpart would be Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and the talks would probably last a day.

Reporters were barred from Paris' Orly airport VIP lounge when Mr. Abed Rabbo and three aides arrived to be whisked away by police to an undisclosed destination.

Sources close to the talks said Mr. Peres would arrive in the late evening and a first meeting might not begin before 11 p.m. (2200 GMT).

Palestinian and diplomatic sources said in Tunis the PLO and Israel had reached a basis for compromise on controlling border crossings, one of the toughest obstacles in the negotiations. But they emphasised that there were still problems.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has already approved a

compromise agreement on the border crossings, the diplomats said.

This compromise was reached during secret weekend talks in Sarpsborg, Norway, one of the diplomats said. Mr. Arafat endorsed it Monday after the PLO team returned to their Tunis headquarters, the diplomat said.

The PLO-Israeli areas of agreement and disagreement at the weekend meeting were summarised in a four-page paper written in English and dated Sunday. It bore no signatures. The first section dealt with border crossings, the second with Jericho.

According to the paper, the PLO and Israel would share control at the two main crossings which link the Gaza Strip to Egypt and Jericho to Jordan. These are the areas where a gradual turnover of control from Israel to the Palestinians is supposed to start, in accordance with the Sept. 13 peace accord the two sides signed in Washington.

The four-page paper, which was seen by an Associated Press reporter, gives Israel full responsibility for the external security of the West Bank and Gaza during an interim period. But it gives Palestinian police a wide range of responsibilities at the crossing points. No time frame was provided for the arrangement.

Mr. Abed Rabbo, who

headed the Palestinian team at the weekend talks in Norway, confirmed the authenticity of the paper.

But he added: "It only summarises points of agreement and disagreement."

The diplomats and the paper said the key differences between Israel and the PLO centre on how much land Israel would relinquish to Palestinian control around Jericho. The PLO wants 210 square kilometres. Israel only wants to give up 90 square kilometres.

The diplomats said the PLO and Israel agreed to create a mechanism to facilitate the entry and exit of people to Gaza and Jericho.

According to the diplomats and the four-page paper, this is how the border crossing would operate:

— Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank and Palestinian visitors to the two zones would pass through a PLO police control point before entering an Israeli check point.

— While Palestinian travelers are at the PLO checkpoint Israeli police would monitor them and their travel documents with electronic equipment.

— The Israelis would have the right to veto entry or exit. They could also order physical searches at random.

(Continued on page 10)



Rescue teams sift through the rubble on Tuesday for victims of Monday's explosion at the Falange Party headquarters in Beirut (AFP photo)

## Falange HQ blast 'setback for Lebanon'

BEIRUT (Agencies) — A huge blast that wrecked the Falange Party headquarters in Beirut, killing three people and wounding 130, is a setback to Lebanon's attempts to erase the scars of civil war, analysts said Tuesday.

They said it had shaken the country's image as a safe haven for international and Arab investment — a theme the government has been pushing by stressing that the civil war of 1975 to 1990 is over for good.

The 250 kilogramme bomb, placed in a truck left in waste-laden just behind the two-story building in east Beirut's Safi district, blew up shortly after midnight on Monday as the right-wing party's politburo was in its weekly meeting.

"This blast is a shock and will have repercussions on the political, economic and social situation in Lebanon," said one economic analyst who requested anonymity.

The killer blast came almost

(Continued on page 5)

## Settlers' number up, but many may quit

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The Jewish settlement population in the occupied territories grew by 7.3 per cent this year, a settler group said Tuesday, but there are indications of a potential shift in the opposite direction.

A lawmaker with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's Labour Party said dozens were interested in moving out because of plans for Palestinian autonomy. Newspapers said thousands have been putting their homes on the market.

The West Bank and Gaza settlement council said that as of Dec. 15, the Jewish population in these areas stood at 136,415 or 7.3 per cent higher than last year's figure of 127,135.

Government officials put the number at 120,000. Officials note that throughout Israel municipal authorities inflate the figures in a bid for more aid, particularly in the settlements where numbers are linked to the importance of their continued existence.

The council statement added that since the start of the uprising in December 1987, the settlement population had risen 120 per cent, basing their figures on city tax records.

Most of the growth was in bedroom communities around Jerusalem such as Maale Adumim the largest settlement with 19,870, up from 16,757 a year ago. Some settlements more distant from main cities registered a drop. Kiryat Arba near Hebron — site of repeated fatal clashes between Arabs and Jews — dropped to 5,900 from 6,527 in 1992.

In all Israel has built 144 settlements in the occupied territories.

Israel's draft budget for 1994 calls for an additional \$7 million outlay for settlements on the Golan Heights, president of the settlements council, told

Israel Radio that the increase would allow 3,000 more Israelis to move to the Golan Heights before the next legislative elections in 1996.

"This increase which is mainly for the construction budget is particularly significant now," Mr. Wollman said, referring to negotiations with Syria over an Israeli withdrawal from the strategic heights in exchange for peace.

He did not disclose the total Golan budget figure, but a housing ministry spokesman said the increase was negligible and that it should not be accorded any political significance.

Finance Minister Avraham Shohat in June advised parliament against making long-term investments on the Golan Heights.

Some 12,000 Israelis live on the Golan in 33 settlements alongside 16,000 Druze residents.

The settler population growth came in the West Bank and Gaza despite Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's decision in 1992 to cut government subsidies and other incentives and to freeze construction in the occupied territories because of peace talks.

Labour legislator Yossi Katz said he has received dozens of appeals lately from settlers in less religiously fervent areas who are interested in receiving government aid to move back into Israel. In all, he estimated as many as half the settlers may be interested in leaving the occupied areas during autonomy.

Mr. Katz introduced a bill on Dec. 6 to compensate settlers who want to leave. The measure does not provide any cost estimates, leaving that to the government and parliament finance committee to decide.

(Continued on page 5)

## Zhirinovskiy party wants power share

MOSCOW (Agencies) Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) said Tuesday it wanted a governmental role, raising the stakes in the game of political cat and mouse with President Boris Yeltsin.

Top party official Alexei Mitrofanov told journalists the LDP aimed to participate in Russia's new government and had already held talks with Kremlin representatives.

His comments, confirming earlier news agency reports of behind-the-scenes negotiations between the two sides, came hours after Mr. Yeltsin described massive LDP gains in the Dec. 12 legislative elections as nothing more than a protest by voters impoverished by economic reform.

Mr. Mitrofanov said: "There have been talks between the Liberal Democratic Party and highly-placed individuals in (Yeltsin's) presidential team."

LDP leaders had met Tuesday to discuss "the prospect of entering government and the promotion of (our) candidates to the most senior positions in the duma" or lower parliamentary house, he added.

Mr. Mitrofanov said he favoured LDP participation in government, citing the youth ministry as a potential portfolio for the party, while a possible LDP target in the Duma was the post of first deputy speaker, he added.

"Negotiations are under way (but) that depends on the president," said Mitrofanov, who is

responsible for communication and foreign affairs within the LDP's self-declared "shadow cabinet."

The LDP has taken about 65 of the 450 seats in the Duma, gains which have raised fears throughout the world of a nascent grassroots upsurge in aggressive Russian nationalism, and presented the pro-Yeltsin camp with an electoral setback it knows it cannot ignore.

Mr. Yeltsin told the ITAR-TASS agency that it was Russia's "many poor people" who had voted for the LDP.

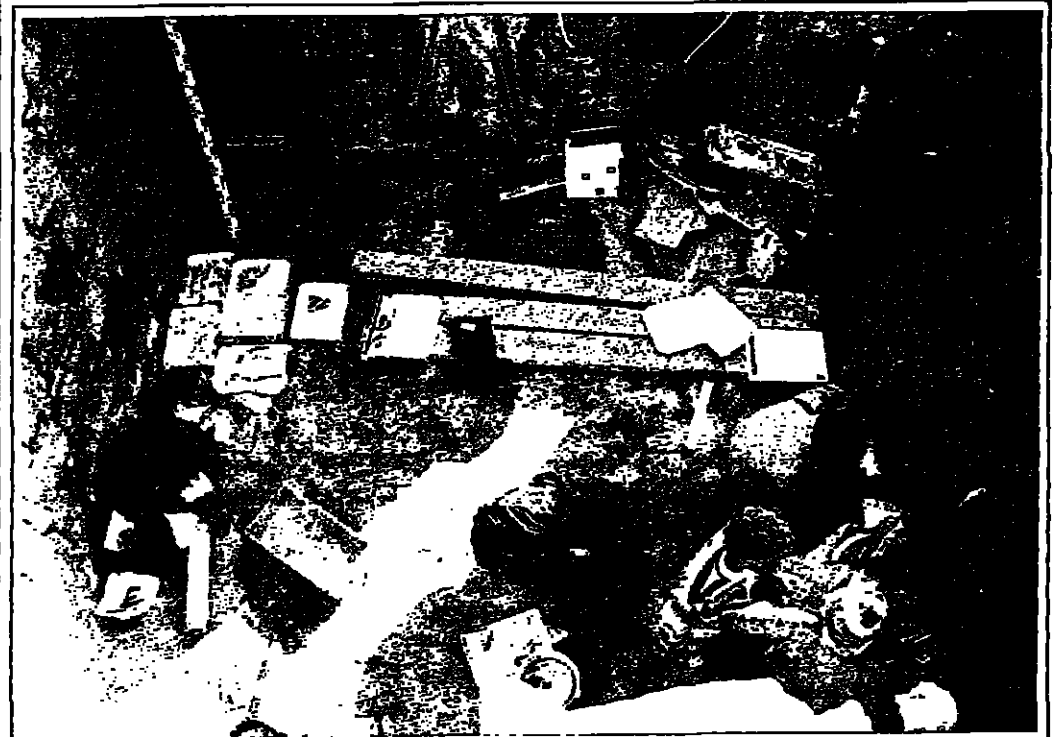
"They voted not for its leader or its programme, but in protest against poverty," the Russian president said.

Mr. Yeltsin's remarks served as a warning to his reformist administration to take steps to ease widespread economic hardship.

But they were also aimed at minimising Mr. Zhirinovskiy's personal political clout and erecting early defences to limit the LDP's sphere of influence.

Interfax news agency earlier reported that Mr. Zhirinovskiy held talks late Monday with Nikolai Medvedev, the administration official in charge of relations with Russia's regions and territories whose role at the Kremlin seems to be growing in importance.

Mr. Medvedev declined to give details on the subject of the talks, Interfax said, while the Kremlin press service refused to confirm or deny whether the meeting had taken place.



Archaeologists at work at the site of an ancient church in Petra

## Ancient scrolls found near ruins of Petra church

By Suhair Obeidat  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A number of texts in Byzantine Greek and probably late Arabic scripts, which could shed light on the history of the late Arab Nabateans, have been uncovered in Petra, Minister of Tourism Mohammad Adwan said Tuesday.

"These new findings are equally important as to the famous Dead Sea (Qumran) scrolls and they are the first of their kind to be found in Petra," Dr. Adwan told the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

According to Pierre Bikai, director of the American Centre of Oriental Research (ACOR), which is conducting the Petra excavation, "these scrolls, most probably, are the documents of the area inhabitants in the fifth and sixth centuries."

The texts, in the form of papyrus scrolls, were found in the area immediately adjacent to the Byzantine Church after two months of excavation conducted by ACOR with the support of the Ministry of Tourism and Anti-

quities and financed by a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Excavations in 1992 and 1993 uncovered mosaics in the aisles of the church, and the current dig which produced the scrolls is being conducted in areas flanking the basilica in advance of a protective shelter to be built over the site, according to a statement by ACOR.

Originally measuring some 30cm long and perhaps some 5-8 cm in width, the scrolls were apparently carbonised in a fire which destroyed the superstructure of the adjacent church and affected the area of the building complex where the scrolls were kept, ACOR said.

The scrolls, ACOR said, were found crushed under and between the charcoal remains of the shelving on which they had been stacked and beneath nearly four metres of stone from the superstructure of the building as a result of an earthquake in A.D. 551.

"Because of their flattened

and carbonised structure, the number of scrolls found had yet to be determined," said ACOR, which estimated that at least 40 scrolls may be separated.

A committee of international experts is now being assembled to undertake "this delicate and demanding task (of separating the crushed scrolls and determine their significance)," ACOR said.

In addition to the scrolls, carbonised clasps, glass fragments, small bronze chains and burned wooden discs were recovered from the charcoal matrix. "This indicates that the scrolls were originally rolled around a rod fitted with end-caps and were stored in textile 'sleeves' and/or wooden boxes with inlaid glass decoration," ACOR said.

"Only when these carbonised papyri are separated, conserved and carefully unwrapped can the script be identified and understood," ACOR said.

"Until that time the significance of the texts remains tantalisingly unknown."

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# Lockerbie probe mired in confusion 5 years after blast

LONDON (Agencies) — Relatives of victims of the Lockerbie bombing gathered Tuesday to mark the fifth anniversary of the attack, painfully aware that experts probing the airliner blast which killed 270 seem further than ever from catching the perpetrators.

The blast on Dec. 21, 1988, vapourised Pan Am Flight 103 at an altitude of 10,000 metres, showering the Scottish village of Lockerbie with blazing wreckage.

All 258 passengers and crew were killed, while 12 villagers died in houses set on fire by the falling debris.

In the eyes of the international community, Libya has long been the main suspect in the attack.

For almost three years investigators in London and Washington have been intent on forcing Tripoli to hand over two Libyan suspects identified after 12,000 interviews carried out in 54 countries.

Libya has steadfastly resisted, prompting the United Nations Security Council to impose progressively tougher sanctions against the country.

Libya refuses to surrender Abdul Basel Al Mohammad Al Megharbi and Al Amin Khalifa Fhimra for trial in Scotland or the United States, where the plane was heading.

Lawyers for the two men say they are willing to stand trial in a neutral country.

The United States has said it would press for an embargo on Libyan oil exports if it persists in refusing to surrender them.

But a newspaper report Sunday that a key witness had retracted a statement implicating Libya in the

attack has given new impetus to the inquiry blaming Libya or Iran may have been involved.

A key early clue for investigators was the discovery among the wreckage of a fragment of an electronic detonator circuit and shreds of clothing in which the powerful semtex explosive had been wrapped.

Initial theories pointed towards Tehran, which was suspected of ordering the bombing as a revenge attack for the "accidental" shooting down over the Gulf of an Iranian Airbus carrying 290 by a U.S. warship.

Investigators at that time suspected the attack was carried out by Ahmad Jibril's hardline Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GLC), which is based in Syria.

An analysis of the fibres of the clothing which had held the explosives then led police to Malta, where a Libyan reportedly managed to register a suitcase containing half a kilo of semtex.

The suitcase was then allegedly transferred onto Flight 103 at Frankfurt prior to its departure for New York.

Investigators charged that the fragment of circuit belonged to a type of detonator which only Libya had purchased.

Key witness Edwin Bollier initially told investigators he was certain the timer used to detonate the Lockerbie bomb was among a batch he had supplied to Libya in 1985.

But Mr. Bollier, who runs a small electronics firm in Zurich, Switzerland, told the Sunday Times: "I remember giving samples to the electronics office for the sale of military equipment at the East

German defence ministry... possibly the inquiry blaming Libya will change."

The former East German Stasi, or state security police, maintained close contacts with Mr. Jibril's faction.

Some observers now believe the Jibril Group could have contracted out the bombing to Libyan agents, who would thus have been intermediaries rather than investigators.

On Tuesday, a memorial service was to be held in London's Westminster Abbey, and 270 candles lit in honour of the victims.

Jim Swire, spokesman for the families of British victims, told the Sunday Times the revelations undermined the current case against Libya.

He said: "The whole Lockerbie scenario is a hypocritical creation for international political convenience," adding that "a full international inquiry" should be held to establish the truth.

The Sunday Times said the prosecution case against Libya "may now be on the verge of collapse."

In Berlin, Stasi files agency spokesman Thomas Rogalla said: "We know that the Stasi had contacts to a large number of organisations, including groups in the Middle East. But we cannot yet say whether they were involved in Lockerbie."

British officials, asked to react to the reports, said any new evidence should be handed immediately to police investigating the mid-air massacre.

They sifted through 200 tonnes of wreckage which was scattered over the Scottish countryside in the search for clues.

## Falange blast revives Beirut horrors

BEIRUT (R) — A huge blast ripped into the headquarters of the Falange Party in Beirut killing two people and wounding 130 and bringing back memories of the horrors of 15 years of civil war in Lebanon.

The 250-kilogramme bomb was placed in a truck left in Wasteland just behind the two-storey building in east Beirut's Stair district.

Security sources said it blew up on Monday shortly after nightfall as the party's politburo was in its weekly meeting.

"This black incident reminds the Lebanese of the nights of violence they lived during the war and which they thought became part of the past," Falange-run Voice of Lebanon radio said.

Saif is just off the former "green line" zone which divided Beirut into east and west during the 1975-90 war.

The ceiling of the meeting room collapsed during the blast and blood stained the floor inside the building.

Politburo member Antoine Baakini died in hospital from severe wounds. A civilian outside the building was also killed.

Hospitals put the number of wounded at 130, of whom 70 were Falange members. The rest were civilians wounded outside the building and included women and children.

The bomb was the biggest to hit Beirut, striving to recover from civil war, since November 1991 when the administration building at the American University of Beirut was destroyed in an attack in which one person died.

The explosion destroyed a small house nearby, damaged surrounding buildings and wrecked several cars. It cut electricity lines and shattered shop facades. Ten workers at the nearby port were slightly wounded by flying glass.

The weekly politburo session was being chaired by Salah Mattar, the Falange's oldest member, as party chief George Saadeh and his deputy Munir Al Hajj were absent.

"Just before we finished I heard a huge blast and parts of the ceiling started coming down. I don't know what happened after that," Mr. Mattar, still bleeding from a wound to his head, told Reuters as he was treated at a hospital.

Troops cordoned off the headquarters. Bomb experts moved in to investigate as rescue workers using flashlights cleared rubble with their bare hands to look for trapped people.

The right-wing Falange led the Christians for most of the war. It opposes Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri's government but calls for dialogue among the various Lebanese groups.

"The message was received and we read it with fire and destruction," said Mr. Saadeh. "It is a message against the civil peace but our reply is that we will sacrifice for the peace's sake and have no shaken insistence to continue the march."

"It's as if our party's destiny is to pay the tax of war and peace," said Mr. Saadeh, who received telephone calls condemning the bomb attack from President Elias Hrawi and several ministers.

Interior Minister Bechara Merheb said: "We are confident that this incident will not disturb Lebanon's civil peace."

Bomb attacks were frequent during the civil war, killing civilians and assassinating political leaders.

## Sabbah urges Israel to rethink its claims

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Monsignor Michel Sabbah, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Monday said Israel must "rethink" its claims to sole control of the Holy City and share power with Palestinians and religious leaders.

The top-ranking Roman Catholic clergyman in the Holy Land said he believed Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government was reassessing its claims to all of the city, including the sector seized from Jordan in the 1967 war and "annexed."

"If Israelis want to have peace they must rethink it. I think they are thinking but because of the public opinion they cannot say anything about it," Monsignor Sabbah told foreign reporters.

"If they want reconciliation, if they want Jerusalem as they want it, a city of God, a city of reconciliation, they must change their mind."

Monsignor Sabbah, 59, who was born in Nazareth and became the first Palestinian to serve in the post in 1988, was interviewed in the Latin Patriarchate located in the old, walled city of Jerusalem.

In unusually candid remarks that came as Israel and the Vatican are on the verge of establishing formal diplomatic ties, Monsignor Sabbah said authority Jerusalem should be shared so that "everyone is master and no one obedient or a servant to the other."

"Jerusalem belongs to two nations, two peoples, Israelis and Palestinians, and three religions: Jews, Muslims and Christians. So we must find a special status for that which satisfies all these parties," he said.

"It could be capital for the Israelis and for the Palestinians and the religious capital... for Christians, as well..." he said, adding that religious leaders should have a say in city government.

Monsignor Sabbah, wearing a large silver cross, said the Vatican-Israeli normalisation, which will begin with the signing of a declaration of principles on Dec. 30, does not cover the future status of Jerusalem.

As Latin Patriarch, Monsignor Sabbah holds a senior rank in the church and his authority extends to Israel, the occupied lands, Cyprus and Jordan.

He shares control with other churches over holy places such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, site of the crucifixion of Jesus. There are about 150,000 Christians in Israel and the occupied territories, less than half of whom are Roman Catholics.

In a Christmas appeal, Monsignor Sabbah called on Israel to free 10,500 Palestinian prisoners as a sign that it was sincere about making peace.

In particular, he said, Israel should free Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual guide of the Hamas movement.

Monsignor Sabbah said he feared for the "unity" of the Palestinian people, who were frustrated by the failure of peace to bring meaningful changes on the ground.

"They are in the same position of confrontation with soldiers every moment of the day, the prisoners are still in prison and the general instability is growing," he said.

Monsignor Sabbah chastised Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leaders for failing to keep their pledge to start implementing Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and West Bank region of Jericho on Dec. 13.

"Our message to the leaders themselves is try not to play with the sensitivities and the feelings of the people. Don't give promises which you cannot give."

"If you give promises, keep them. If you give dates, keep up to the dates you give."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Kuwait declares two-day weekend**

KUWAIT (AP) — Government offices and banks will be taking a two-day weekend beginning in the new year, press reports said. Most Islamic countries currently maintain a one-day weekend on Friday. The independent newspaper Al Qabas quoted the head of the civil service office, Abdul Aziz Al Zaben, as saying government offices will close Thursdays and Fridays. Civil servants will work seven hours a day instead of six to make up the time on the other workdays. Government offices now work half days on Thursdays, when civil servants are notorious for being unproductive. Mr. Zaben notified all government ministries of the decision on Sunday. The newspaper quoted the governor of the central bank, Sheikh Salem Abdul Aziz Al Sabah, as saying banks would take Friday and Saturdays off. The decision is not compulsory for the private sector.

**Two Iranian 'agents' held in Paris**

PARIS (R) — Two men suspected of being Iranian secret agents gathering intelligence about opponents of the Tehran government in France were remanded in custody on Monday, justice sources said. Judge Jean-Louis Bruguiere, who is in charge of terrorism probes, formally placed the two under investigation on suspicion of terrorist criminal conspiracy. One of the two, Iranian national Mojtaba Mashayeh, 37, is also to be investigated on suspicion of involvement in the killing in Paris three years ago of Cyrus Elahi, an opponent of the Iranian government, the sources said. Elahi, a doctor who held American citizenship, belonged to a group supporting the family of the late Shah Reza Pahlavi. The other suspect, Hossain Yazdanzadeh, 33, is an Iran-born French national, the sources said. Both were detained in Paris last Thursday.

**Arson suspected in blaze that killed 6 Kurds**

MULHOUSE, France (R) — A blaze which killed six Turkish Kurds in Eastern France a month ago could have been started deliberately, justice sources said Monday. The prosecutor in the town of Mulhouse had opened a fresh probe for suspected arson after a first report from experts. The blaze was originally blamed on a faulty stove. The sources said traces of petrol had been found in the staircase of the house, but there was no indication that the possible arson could have been an attack against immigrants. Local media have quoted residents as saying the blaze could have resulted from a dispute among Kurds.

**Senior Iranian banker accused of fraud**

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian authorities have arrested a senior manager of a state bank of embezzlement charges in the second such fraud case in a month, newspapers said. A branch manager of the state-run Sepah Bank, identified only as Mohsen, was arrested along with an alleged accomplice on charges of pocketing 3,600 million rials (\$2 million), the daily Kayhan said. But it did not say when they were arrested. Mohsen and his partner were accused of illegally using the bank's holdings to speculate on the hard-currency market. Since the beginning of 1993, the central bank has tightly controlled and limited dealings in foreign currencies, in a bid to lessen the country's foreign currency expenditures. Several senior members of Tejarat, the country's foreign trade bank, including its managing director, were arrested last month on charges of embezzling millions of dollars, according to the Iranian press.

**U.S. denounces Iranian death sentences**

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United States accused Iran of human rights violations and religious persecution Monday, citing death sentences against three members of the Baha'i faith. The criticism came as the 184-nation U.N. General Assembly criticised reported widespread human rights abuses in Iran. The vote criticising Iran's human rights record was 74-23, with 51 abstentions. U.S. delegate Victor Marrero told the assembly that a recent U.N. human rights report on Iran criticised the death sentences against two Baha'is held without charges since April 1989. A third Baha'i recently has been condemned to death for apostasy, he said. "It is clear from these and other cases that the regime in Tehran continues to flout the human rights of its own citizens, unrelentingly persecuting some simply because of their religious beliefs," he said.

**Gunmen kill Kuwait policeman**

KUWAIT (R) — Gunmen in a car opened fire at a police patrol in Kuwait on Monday and killed a policeman, the Interior Ministry said. The patrol had approached the car in the southern region of Roudhafa because it looked suspicious, the official Kuwait News Agency reported.

**Thai police arrest two Iranians**

BANGKOK (R) — Thai police arrested two Iranian tourists on Tuesday on charges of murder resulting from robbery. Karami Ali Reza, and Ghasem Ahmadi Pazoki, 27, were arrested a day after a male hotel receptionist was found dead in a hotel room in central Bangkok. The victim was found with a broken neck five hours after he was seen going to the Iranians' room, police told reporters. The victim's gold necklace, watch and cash were missing, police said. The Iranians face life in prison if convicted of the crime.

**EC may ask Iran to lift Rushdie sentence**

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Community (EC) may ask Iran to lift the death sentence on British writer Salman Rushdie, but is wondering how best to tackle the subject, Belgian Foreign Minister Willy Claes said on Monday. "We shall be considering a new approach to Tehran. We are considering what is the most appropriate method for trying to put an end to the so-called fatwa (death sentence)," Mr. Claes, current EC president, told a news conference after a meeting of EC foreign ministers.

## Detained Americans linked with nascent Jewish terror group

TEL AVIV (AP) — Six people, including at least three American men and one woman, were jailed on suspicion of hoarding weapons and planning attacks against Arabs, police said Sunday.

Their arrests were seen in Israel as a pre-emptive strike against Jewish militants seeking to organise an armed underground that could seriously jeopardise Arab-Israeli peace efforts.

"These are groups that have long been mentally ready to conduct terrorist activities against Arabs. The only reason they don't is because they are under surveillance," said Ehud Sprinzak, a political scientist at Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

The crackdown followed the arrest last month of a militant rabbi, Avraham Toledano, caught at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion international airport trying to smuggle in gun parts, bomb-making manuals, telescopes and silencers from the United States.

Those arrested were all supporters of the Kach movement, founded by the late Rabbi Meir Kahane before his 1990 assassination in New York City.

Police nabbed the six Friday and an Israeli judge ordered them held on suspicion of conspiring to commit acts of terror against Arabs, membership in an unidentified illegal organisation and possession of weapons, said lawyer Larry Dab.

He is defending two of the Americans, Mark Bluestein, 25, and Howard Friedman, 36, both from Philadelphia. Mr. Bluestein is a law student currently studying at a seminary and Mr. Friedman is a businessman.

"He has no idea what hit him," Mr. Dab said about Mr. Bluestein, adding that he had no criminal record. The other two Americans in custody are Lynne Sherry Handelman, 41, from Miami, Florida and Aharon Weinstein, 33, whose hometown was not immediately available.

Israelis Baruch Ben-Yosef, a native of New York City who has dual nationality, and Israel Fuchs were also jailed and their homes searched by police.

The Kach movement on Sunday condemned the detentions as a political witchhunt, and predicted police would eventually have to let them go for lack of evidence.

"This is an unjustified political lynching. They are arresting people only because of their opinions," said Kach leader Baruch Marzel.

Three of the Americans were visited by U.S. embassy officials over the weekend. Embassy spokesman Carl Chan refused to give any further details.

About 10 per cent of the 130,000 Jewish settlers living in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip are immigrants from the United States.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government has been under pressure to curb militant Jewish settlers and some have called for outlawing altogether anti-Arab groups such as Kach and Kahane-Lives, which receive the bulk of their funding from the United States.

Mr. Sprinzak, an author who studied the Jewish settler movement, said there are only a few hundred activists in the anti-Arab organisations.

"It is time to call them undergrounds," said Mr. Sprinzak, noting it does not take large numbers to foment ominous violence. "They could become a very important link in a snowball of violence," he added.

Police are still investigating the murder of three Palestinians gunned down in a drive-by shooting Dec. 10. A previously unheard of Jewish group called the sword of David took responsibility for the slayings.

The shooting took place near the West Bank town of Hebron and the settlement of Kiryat Arba, centres of Jewish militancy. Israeli newspapers have blamed the phenomenon on new "Jewish undergrounds."

A group by that name carried out bombings and shootings against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank in the early 1980s. It was broken up and its members jailed, but all have since been released.

## War with Kurdish rebels taking toll in Turkey

By Daniel J. Wakin  
The Associated Press

LICE, Turkey — The government minister flew to the heart of the Kurdish rebellion zone to proclaim that the army has matters in hand. He flew by military helicopter above roads that have become unsafe to travel because of guerrilla attacks.

Guarded by dozens of soldiers with M-16s, Necmettin Cevheri strode past an army tank at the muddy landing pad. He came to buck up the morale of the few remaining townsfolk two months after a battle between troops and rebels demolished much of this remote town.

"We are in control. Don't follow empty ideologies," he told about 100 mostly elderly men and wide-eyed children while soldiers in an armoured personnel carrier trained their weapons on the main road.

The army has inflicted more damage on the rebels this year, but control is still elusive in Turkey's mountainous and poor southeast, where Kurdish militants have waged a decade-long war for self-rule.

Guerrillas of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), numbering about 7,000 by government estimate and more than 15,000 by their own, have held the region virtually hostage.

In recent months, the war has emerged from a local conflict to threaten the economic and social well-being of all of Turkey, a vital Western ally next door to the unstable Caucasus states and the Middle East. Analysts say the war is costing the government \$6.6

billion a year, and ethnic tensions have worsened.

For years the government in Ankara treated the matter as a localised terrorist problem, ignoring demands from Kurds for local autonomy and protection for their language and culture. Now the government acknowledges it is waging war and has committed 140,000 soldiers to the fight.

The guerrilla's increasingly harsh tactics — the murder of teachers and other civilians who do not cooperate — have alienated many of the estimated six million Kurds in the region and outraged the rest of the country. Almost every week a soldier's funeral becomes the occasion for a rally against Kurds or the PKK, as the guerrilla group is universally known for its Kurdish initials.

Kurdish nationalism does not appear widespread outside the region. About half of Turkey's 12 million Kurds are integrated into Turkish society. The Kurdish region covers not only Turkey but parts of Iraq, Iran and Syria.

But the government's crackdown has provoked criticism, to the military campaign has led to civilian deaths and brought claims of forced evacuations of villages, beatings and destruction of homes. Police have closed a pro-PKK newspaper and detained lawyers who represent rebel sympathisers.

The government says excesses are punished, and it denies the rights of Kurds are systematically violated.

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel. 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
17:30	Ordy
18:00	Sports N.B.A.
19:00	News in French
19:15	Le Journal De L'Histoire
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Too Close for Comfort
21:00	Ocean World
22:00	News in English
22:30	Film "Contract for Murder"
PRAYER TIMES	
05:04	Fajr
06:27	(Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:34	Dhuhr
16:18	Asr
16:40	Maghrib
18:03	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swellath, Tel. 810740	
Anglican Church of God Church, Tel. 623785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 627440	
St. Isidore Church Tel. 661757	
Terrence Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 625226	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328	
German-speaking Evangelical Church Tel. 664193	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
It will be partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance of thunderous rain in most parts of the Kingdom. There will be a slight drop in temperatures and winds will be southeasterly moderate. In Amman, it will be partly cloudy with a chance of thunderous showers; winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min/Max. temp.	
Amman 8 / 14	

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

Agaba	15/21
Deccan	7/17
Jordan Valley	14/22
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 18, Agaba 20. Humidity readings: Amman 57 per cent, Agaba 51 per cent.	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Hisham Kar'an	760276
Dr. Walid Al Ma'an	675245
Dr. Arif Al Ashab	625207
Dr. Mohammad Shuaibi	623093
Firas pharmacy	661912
Ferdows pharmacy	770336
Al Asena pharmacy	627055
Hairah pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	626736
Yacoub pharmacy	644943
Shmeisani pharmacy	627460
Nairouh pharmacy	623672
Najib pharmacy	647632
IRBID:	
Dr. Mohammad Al Hilu	279773
Al Quds pharmacy	(-)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Hossain Al Hal	963444
Khalil pharmacy	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	630341
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	301228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896391
Public Security Department	690351
Al-Musader Hospital	6672709
The Islamic, Adhali	666127/27
Al-Ahli, Adhali	6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen	77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafian	77511/26
Army/Marka	89101/115
Queen Alia Hospital	612340/50
Amal Hospital	674155
ZARQA:	
Zarga Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Great Catholic Hospital	(02)72735
The Sina Hospital	(09)986732
Al Hina Modern Hospital	(09)989090
IRBID:	
Princess Basma Hospital	(02)727355
Great Catholic Hospital	(02)72735
The Al-Nafsa Hospital	(02)731001
AMMAN:	
Princess Haya Hospital	(02)731411
RJ Flight Information (06-53201)	
Queen Alia Intl. Airport. (06-53200)	
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalil Maternity, J. Amn.	642616
Adhali Maternity, J. Amn.	642412
Jabal Amman Maternity	642632
Malhas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shmeisani	6641714
Shmeisani Hospital	669121
University Hospital	645405
Al-Musader Hospital	6672709
The Islamic, Adhali	666127/27
Al-Ahli, Adhali	6641646
Italian, Al-Muhajreen	77101/3
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Great Catholic Hospital	(02)72735
The Al-Nafsa Hospital	(02)731001
AMMAN:	
Princess Haya Hospital	(02)731411

HJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN	
Dep. Amman	8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus	5:30 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus	7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman	5:00 p.m. every Sunday
MARKET PRICES	
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.	
Apple	730/400
Banana	600
Banana (Mukammal)	620
Beans	600 / 500
Cabbage	1000 / 500
Carrot	340/160
Cauliflower	180 / 100
Celentane	300 / 100
Cucumbers (large)	180 / 100
Cucumbers (small)	320 / 240
Eggplant	160 / 70
Garlic	900/600
Grass Fruit	160/100
Lemon	30 / 100
Marrow (large)	150 / 80
Marrow (small)	320 / 220
Onion (green)	70/500
Onion (dry)	280 / 300
Onion (green)	250 / 160
Pepper (hot)	250 / 100
Pepper (sweet)	250 / 100
Pepper (hot)	240 / 150
Radish	1300 / 100
Tomato	300 / 100
Spinach	180 / 120

جورنال صفا







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## Enter, rights commissioner

THE DECISION of the General Assembly Monday to create the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights is a giant and spectacular step in the annals of U.N. The fact that the assembly's resolution was taken unanimously makes this move, although long overdue, all the more irreversible as far as the many countries that have been either opposed or lukewarm to the idea are concerned. The proposal to establish such a high post was tested during the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights last June but was turned over to the General Assembly to act on after it became clear that there was strong opposition to it. The Third World countries had most to fear from upgrading the U.N. involvement in human rights issues because their records in that field have been by and large dismal and have therefore developed strong reservations about increased international efforts to meddle into their domestic affairs on such issues. The decision by the Vienna forum to pass the responsibility, as it were, was in fact intended to kill the idea altogether. What is clear now, however, is that the western initiative spearheaded by Washington has won the day by encouraging the developing countries to accept and support the proposal.

From the Third World countries' point of view, the central issue has always been that any higher international profile on human rights must be linked to the 184-member General Assembly where they make up the greater majority of the member states. As long as this objective was secured, the developing countries — which still prefer to put the accent on economic, social and cultural rights at the expense of civil and political rights — were in a better position to yield to western pressure.

In retrospect, the idea of creating this post has been supported by Jordan ever since it was floated in various international fora. Jordan voiced support for the proposal as far back as the mid-seventies when certain Latin American countries submitted it for consideration. As long as the mandate of the proposed high commissioner is to coordinate all international efforts in the field of human rights and he or she is answerable to the General Assembly, we have no reason to develop anxieties about it, we reasoned. As a matter of fact, this was the position of Jordan during the Vienna meeting as well. What matters is not the seniority of the post that will be charged with U.N. human rights' efforts, but the link between it and the General Assembly where the priorities of the majority of members could be reckoned with and respected. Against this backdrop, the creation of the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights is a worthy cause that deserves the support of all democratic states.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

EYES ARE directed these days towards Riyadh where the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are holding a summit amid confusion in inter-Arab relations and unclear Arab policies not only in the Gulf area but throughout the Arab World, said Al Ra'i daily Tuesday. Every Arab is expecting the summit to come up with new initiatives aimed at ending differences among Arab governments and launching a chapter of brotherly ties and reconciliation, following three years of estrangement, said the daily. It goes without saying that the GCC countries stand to lose a great deal from the present divisions, especially because these countries are forced to spend a fortune on armament as they feel insecure, said the paper. It said that only nations that sell the weapons benefit from the state of affairs prevailing in the Gulf and the Arab World, especially in the Gulf region whose countries are continually making security arrangements and signing costly defence pacts with the western countries. Admitting that it is the right of each Arab Gulf country to carry out its own armament programme it finds fit for its defence purposes, the paper said, close relations with the Arab states outside the GCC and improvement in inter-Arab relations could save the GCC a fortune because good relations can make the countries more dependent on their Arab kinsmen rather than relying on an umbrella of U.S. and western treaties. A new situation charged with fresh challenges has emerged following the Gulf war and a reconsideration of GCC policies at the domestic and external level is of paramount importance added the daily. It expressed hope that wisdom and reason would prevail at the GCC summit meeting, enabling its countries to pave the ground for a new dawn in inter-Arab relations.

## Clinton's first year — what kind of success?

By Dr. James Zogby

As 1993 draws to a close, the White House and the Democratic Party have been faxing daily memos and reports to the press and political analysts trumpeting the administration's successful first year in office.

Despite early setbacks, the president has, in fact, recorded an impressive set of legislative victories and initiatives. There are in all of the flurry of activity, some ironies to be found and some observations that are worth making at this point.

First of all, the claims of success in the daily faxes are absolutely justified. In the words of Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, Mr. Clinton's first year has been "the most productive first year of any president since Eisenhower's first term. It's a remarkable record, and the most striking thing about the American political scene now is that hardly any American knows as believes it."

In addition to budget, NAFTA, and the economic stimulus package, which were all close votes, with Mr. Clinton winning all but the last, there were quite a number of other pieces of legislation that helped to define the administration's first year.

After languishing for ten years in the Congress and being vetoed by President Bush, the Family and Medical Leave Act was signed into law this year. As he promised in the campaign, Mr. Clinton worked with the Congress to enact this piece of legislation, which guarantees that workers will be able to keep their jobs while taking time off to care for relatives suffering from serious illnesses. Mr. Clinton also kept his promise to reverse President Bush's so-called "gag order" against any discussion of abortion in federally funded family planning clinics.

The president also worked quickly with allies on Capitol Hill to pass the "Motor Voter" bill that eases regulations for voter registration, in many cases allowing people to register to vote as they get or renew their driver's licenses. Another high profile achievement of the administration was the passage and signing into law of the Brady Bill, another bill that was vetoed by President Bush. Although only a mild step towards reform of the nation's laws regulating guns, the Brady Bill is the first piece of national legislation on this issue since the Firearms Control Act of 1968.

Lost in the shuffle of the high profile battles mentioned above and those over various fiscal and budgetary matters, were two other significant pieces of legislation. The administration began to put its strategy for young Americans into place with the passage of the National and Community Service Act and a bill reforming and simplifying the government's student loan programme.

The National and Community Service Act will, over the next five years, provide money for college for 100,000 young people in exchange for two years of community service. And the reform of the federal student loan programme will provide more

money for student loans for the first time in twelve years while saving later collection costs.

Polls done at the time and since have shown that all of these action meet with public approval which, with the exception of the reversal of the "gag rule" on abortion counseling, is overwhelming.

Another measure of Mr. Clinton's success is that he has had to veto a single bill since taking office — a feat achieved by a first-year president only two other times in the last sixty years. This is in part a measure of Mr. Clinton's good relations with the Congress despite some early setbacks, but it is also a function of how his agenda has dominated activity on Capitol Hill. Because in addition to the victories mentioned above, and the several budget-related matters that have consumed a great deal of time, the Congress is also working on Mr. Clinton's proposals on ethics and campaign finance reform, the vaunted health care reform legislation, and is in conference over the president's Anti-Crime Bill.

The second point worth noting is that this complex set of initiatives is helping to define Mr. Clinton's standing as a "new Democrat." Although he campaigned with the claim that he would be a new kind of Democrat, it has taken a year for him to show what he means.

The old Democrat image is that of a politician devoted to

solving social and other problems through the government by creating programmes and raising taxes. The stereotype of this old Democrat is "soft" on crime, favouring programmes to deal with the root causes of crime over building more prisons and stiffening sentences. The old Democrat also habitually sides with organised labour over business interests, which translates into a strong protectionist stance on trade issues.

But over the past twelve years, as U.S. politics has drifted slowly to the right, the old Democrat image fell out of favour with some Democrats, who felt that a more pro-business, tough-on-crime and anti-tax position would be better for the party. Although this was always a latent tension in the party, over the past decade it has become an institutionalized division between the liberal "left" and conservative "right" wings of the Democratic Party.

Mr. Clinton's new Democrat label means a blending of the two approaches. He has moved to the centre of American politics, agreeing with the Democratic left on some issues and the right on others.

The Family and Medical Leave Act and the Brady Bill were broadly supported by the liberals and passed with overwhelming Democratic support in both Houses. His budget bill and the recent fight over further deficit reductions was a more mixed affair, with members of Con-

gress from both wings of both parties finding reasons to vote for and against both proposals. But on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and on the Anti-Crime package in waiting, Mr. Clinton relied on some support from conservative Democrats and got the majority of his support from Republicans.

As I have mentioned before, Mr. Clinton has put his coalitions together on an issue-by-issue basis. There have been very few members of Congress who have voted for even a majority of Mr. Clinton's agenda, much less all of it. Of particular concern to some is that the administration's agenda is not specifically geared to attract Democratic support in some cases, and they worry that he seems so willing to look to the Republicans for allies, as he did over NAFTA.

So the questions are: Is the President shaping a new coalition? And if so, will it last? To this point, the evidence on both questions is mixed.

The place Mr. Clinton moved, from what is discernable of his overall philosophy, is not virgin soil. There are a number of Republicans, including the governors of Massachusetts and California, who describe themselves and their policies and fiscally conservative but socially liberal. Such a label would also seem to fit Mr. Clinton.

But these Republican gov-

ernors have run into problems similar to Mr. Clinton's: by relying on members of the other party to get part of their agenda, they alienate the true believers in their own party. This is something that has definitely happened to Mr. Clinton.

Organised labour has been withholding its usual monetary support for the Democratic Party due to its anger over Mr. Clinton's pro-NAFTA stance. The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) has clashed with Mr. Clinton several times this year, with even more bitter conflicts on the horizon. And Jesse Jackson, who is still the leading spokesman for the left wing of the party, has not been an ally of Mr. Clinton's on any piece of legislation since the failed economic stimulus bill.

Mr. Clinton has won some praise from conservative Democratic leaders, though as we shall see, that branch of the party has not universally accepted the president's agenda. Likewise, although Mr. Clinton has won kind words from even such staunch Republican fighters as Senator Bob Dole and Congressman Newt Gingrich, they have both made it clear that their alliances with Mr. Clinton over NAFTA and the Anti-Crime package have only been marriages of convenience and they look forward to beating other Democrats in 1994 and Mr. Clinton himself in 1996.

Yet it is impossible to

ignore the fact that Mr. Clinton's legislative accomplishments coincide strongly with public sentiment and that although he has been knocked down and declared dead more times than any observer cares to count, he has lost only one high profile battle of the many he has fought. Seemingly, however, his victories have not given him the kind of political capital that helps to build coalitions, and as yet one would be hard-pressed to name even the core of a Clinton coalition in Congress.

But his performance has not gone unnoticed by everyone. The political analyst Joe Klein noted that there is "something unusual and admirable about Clinton's first year. He expended great gobs of political capital on issue (like) deficit reduction, free trade, etc., that will yield him no immediate gain." The voting public has shown that it appreciates political courage (particularly when it is combined with an excellent television presence such as Mr. Clinton has).

This seems to be borne out in recent poll results that show Mr. Clinton with a positive rating of 57 per cent compared to only 37 per cent negative, and his performance must be the main reason the Democratic Party enjoys and positive-negative rating of 54 per cent to 32 per cent, while the Republican Party has lower positives and higher negatives, with a favourable-unfavourable rating of 50 per cent to 39 per cent. And when asked whether Mr. Clinton and the Democrats or the Republicans are more sincere about moving the country forward, the president and his party came out ahead by a 50 per cent to 24 per cent margin.

So despite all the bruises he's endured, Mr. Clinton still comes out ahead of his two strongest potential challengers in hypothetical matchups for 1996. He would beat Senator Dole by a margin of 50 per cent to 39 per cent. And even against Jack Kemp, a Republican proponent of the fiscally conservative socially liberal stance, Mr. Clinton comes out ahead 49 per cent to 36 per cent. This and other polling data suggests that, because he is attacking issues that the public is very concerned about, he is gaining supporters. By 1996, the president may yet succeed in forging a lasting coalition among the voters even if he fails to build one in the Congress. Or at least he is making progress in that direction. As House Minority Whip Newt Gingrich noted: "President Clinton has every reason to feel pretty good right now. In all fairness, as a partisan Republican, you have to give him pretty positive marks. He clearly came out of the year better than he went in."

With comments like that coming from one of the harshest-tongued critics in Congress, Mr. Clinton must feel rather comfortable as he heads into the holidays and prepares for 1994. Yet, as we head into the new year, it is only appropriate to look to the future. And as far as U.S. politics is concerned, Shakespeare's augury that "what's past is prologue" seems very apt.



## NATO keeps wary eye on Russia

By Peter Mackler  
Agence France Presse

BRUSSELS — NATO is sticking to plans to boost military ties with its old Soviet Bloc foes but keeping a new wary eye on Moscow after a strong showing by ultra-nationalists in Russia's elections.

While NATO officials stress it is too early to draw conclusions from Sunday's parliamentary polls, a note of caution has crept into their statements after months of hailing Moscow as a reliable post-cold war partner.

Secretary General Manfred Woerner took pains Tuesday to underline the 16-member alliance's two-track policy toward Russia, matching cooperation with the need for NATO "cohesion and vigilance."

The success registered by the Liberal Democratic Party of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, a champion of Russian expansionism, sent alarm bells ringing in western capitals already wondering about Moscow's future direction.

"A lot of what he (Zhirinovskiy) proposes is worrying," said one NATO analyst. "But it would only be

a continuation of what we have seen over the last six to eight months."

NATO officials have noted a hardening of Russian rhetoric since the army bailed out President Boris Yeltsin in his bloody showdown with parliamentary hardliners in October.

Moscow has also become more aggressive about bringing Georgia into the confederation of independent states, protecting ethnic Russians abroad and establishing Russian prerogatives as peacekeepers in former Soviet republics.

NATO has sought without success to get a full briefing on the new Russian military doctrine which would allow Moscow to launch a first nuclear strike and deploy forces outside its territory.

Yet the alliance is still pressing ahead with plans to tighten links with Russia and offer Eastern European states closer cooperation but no security guarantees or promises of NATO membership, which Moscow opposes.

Countries such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia are seeking to join NATO and their candida-

cies have taken on new urgency after the right turn taken by Russia in its elections.

Polish President Lech Walesa even suggested that without firm membership prospects his country might spurn the "partnership for peace" plan which NATO is expected to adopt at its summit here next month.

But NATO diplomats and analysts said the alliance would tread carefully before considering additional security assurances for the Eastern Europeans and the Baltic states living uneasily in Russia's shadow.

"It's natural that these countries feel more worried," said one NATO diplomat, who asked not to be named. "The Baltic republics are the most obvious examples. We will continue to look at the whole issue."

Andre Dumoulin, of the European Institute for Research and Information on Peace and Security, said that NATO would have to make sure that any move to enlarge did not end up weakening the alliance.

"They will go slowly. They cannot promise anything," Mr. Dumoulin said. "Caution will be the order of the day because of the elections."

The political turmoil in Russia will also reinforce warnings by NATO officials against further cuts in military spending by member states which have already slashed their budgets and force levels considerably.

Mr. Woerner told a NATO defence ministers meeting here last week that any additional reductions "would risk undermining the quality of our forces and thus affect the credibility of our collective defence."

But NATO officials also urged a wait-and-see attitude on Russia's future political orientation, especially with the latest poll results showing that Mr. Zhirinovskiy and his party might not have done as well as first feared.

The NATO analyst said that Mr. Zhirinovskiy clearly had won solid support among the army rank-and-file in Russia, more by promising higher salaries and more housing than by championing the cause of a greater Russia.

But the extent of his influence on the military remained to be seen.

"The senior leadership does not need an explosive political figure to stimulate emotions, particularly in the middle

ranks," the analyst said. "They do not want the election to draw the military into the political scene."

## LETTERS

### Thank you, dear brother

To the Editor:

On Tuesday, Dec. 21, at around 7.30 a.m., as I was approaching my house off the Sixth Circle in Sweifiyeh, I noticed a white Volkswagen with yellow plates following me closely. I gave a right signal for the car to pass, but the driver insisted to follow me.

As I was parking my car, he stopped. I rolled down the window. He came to me and said: "I have been following you for some time now. Your child (2 years old) is standing in the front seat. He could get hurt if you stopped suddenly. Please, you must understand that your child could be a victim."

I was not surprised to hear this piece of advice. Before he turned to leave I asked if he was German. He nodded. I am writing this letter to thank this German brother for his great concern. May God bless him and all the people like him who care. Danke.

Nabil Bayouk,  
P.O. Box 850011,  
Amman 11185.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

هذه احدى النسخ



# Features

## Falange HQ blast a 'setback'

(Continued from page 1)

two years to the day after a car-bomb explosion in the neighbourhood of Basta killed 20 civilians and wounded 111 others.

The attack on the Falange revived memories of the violence — marked by car-bombings, shelling and kidnappings — which devastated Lebanon for 15 years (see page 2).

As rescue workers cleared the debris with bulldozers after an all-night search, hospital officials said many of the 100 people wounded were still in serious condition.

The party meeting was attended by 120 members, but the three top leaders, party chief George Saadeh, his deputy Munir Al Hajj and secretary general Karim Pakradouni were all absent.

Dr. Saadeh, who is ill, at home, accused the enemies of peace in Lebanon of staging the bombing. There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

"The message was received, in all its fire and its devastation. It's a message against peace," Mr. Saadeh said. But he did not specify who could have carried out the attack.

At its last congress in November, the right-wing Falange — the oldest Christian faction — distanced itself from other Christian political groups

by moving closer to Damascus. Syria is a major power-broker in Lebanon, where it has 35,000 troops.

The Falange defended its pragmatism by saying it was high time for the Christians to return to the forefront of the political scene after boycotting the 1992 general election.

The congress also put an end to the link between the Falange and its former armed wing, the Lebanese Forces led by Samir Geagea who tried but failed a year ago to take control of the party.

Former Lebanese President Bashir Gemayel, a Falange leader, was killed with 21 aides when a bomb went off one floor above a meeting in another party office in east Beirut on Sept. 14, 1982, one day before he was due to be sworn in.

Another President, Rene Mouawad, was killed with 23 assistants when a car-bomb ripped through his motorcade in Nov. 22, 1989, days after he took office.

The Falange party, founded in 1936, is made up almost exclusively of Maronite Catholics. Its post-war policy of openness toward Muslims and Syria has angered other Maronite groups.

The Falange has also been at odds with Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, who has tightened his control on government since he took office 14 months ago.

## Settlers' number goes up

(Continued from page 1)

side, he said. It was not yet debated.

"We want to allow them to turn over a new leaf, and the sooner the better, instead of waiting another five years until the end of autonomy," Mr. Katz said.

"I met a delegation of set-

tlers... from all over the West Bank and they all told me they were ready to move into Israeli territory if the government helps them," Mr. Katz said.

He urged the government to encourage settlers to move to the Galilee in northern Israel or the desert area in the south from today.

## Anxious growers keep eyes peeled for deadly banana fungus

By Steve Hays

Reuter

AMSTERDAM — Banana-growing countries are fighting a spreading epidemic that threatens disaster for the world's fourth largest food crop, commodity experts say.

The culprit is black sigatoka, an airborne fungus that attacks leaves of the tree and devastates the crop.

"We are facing a serious threat to the Cavendish banana which is the main export crop and even more worrying to the Plantain type, which is the staple food crop for large parts of Africa," a spokesman for the Common Fund for Commodities said.

The Amsterdam-based CFC is a U.N. associated body and

has secured an agreement with the World Bank to finance research into the disease.

The limited number of varieties and the difficulty in breeding new strains makes the banana particularly vulnerable to disease and the scale of the problem is huge.

The world banana crop is about 70 million tonnes a year, of which 10 per cent is exported. Globally the fruit ranks after rice, milk and wheat in total cash value.

In the 1950s the world's banana trade was wiped out by a banana disease which attacked the main export type, Gros Michel. Growers were forced to turn to the resistant Cavendish.

This time there is as yet no

resistant alternative to the Cavendish and Plantain, a starchy, non-sweet relative eaten as a staple in tropical latitudes.

"To illustrate what black sigatoka can do, look at Colombia where it arrived five years ago and within two years the multi-million Plantain export industry had stopped," said Gabrielle Persley, biotechnology manager at the World Bank.

Black Sigatoka, named after a valley in Fiji where it was discovered, wrecked the export Banana industries in the south Pacific islands and spread to Latin America in the 1970s.

In the mid-1980s it moved to Africa, reaching East Africa towards the end of decade Ms.

Persley said.

Countries such as Uganda, where Plantains are the main food crop, are highly vulnerable, she added.

The disease has been controlled by using increasing amounts of chemical fungicides which cause environmental damage, Professor Ivan Buddenhagen of the University of California told Reuters by telephone.

He estimated the worldwide cost to growers of spraying for the disease at \$50 million a year.

"The problem is black sigatoka has developed resistance to most of the compounds used against it and now there is only one major fungicide group left that is effective," he said.

Mr. Buddenhagen said a mutation which might overcome the last main defence against the disease could appear "tomorrow or in 10 years' time."

Alarm bells rang last year when the banana crops of Guatemala and Honduras were devastated by black sigatoka and the fungicide appeared to be ineffective, he said.

Investigation revealed that the Central American epidemic appeared to stem from unusually wet weather conditions.

Mr. Buddenhagen said the banana crop was facing a double threat with the reappearance of soil-borne Panama disease, which kills the plant by

blocking its water capillaries, in previously resistant Cavendish bananas in Australia and Taiwan.

"Bananas have not received in the last 25 years the kind of support and research a crop of its importance, such as wheat or corn, would receive in the U.S.," he said.

"In the north we look on bananas as a dessert fruit, but in the southern countries starchy bananas are a major food crop."

The initiative by the CFC, the World Bank and other bodies has taken five years to put together and will provide about \$10 million for research into breeding disease-resistant bananas and disease management practices.

## Prisoners used as human shields and labourers in Bosnian war

By Alain Bommenel

Agence France Presse

MOSTAR, Bosnia-Herzegovina — The bullet, fired by a fellow Croat soldier, ended Dragan's 154 days as a prisoner of the mainly Muslim Bosnian army.

It shattered his right arm on Nov. 22, rendering him useless to his captors who had been forcing the 23-year-old to dig trenches along the front in this southern Bosnian city.

"I don't have any hard feelings against the fellow soldier

who injured me. He was doing his job," said Dragan, as he lay in a hospital bed here following his release last week as part of a prisoner exchange between the Bosnian army and the Croat Defence Forces (HVO).

"I would have also fired," he added.

Prior to the war that erupted in this former Yugoslav republic 19 months ago Dragan was a law student.

But soon after the conflict began, he joined thousands of other young men — Serbs, Muslims and Croats — who

took up arms and were later taken prisoner by the enemy.

The prisoners, estimated at 5,000 throughout Bosnia, for the most part have been forced and sometimes beaten into digging trenches along the frontlines, building bunkers or retrieving some of the injured while fired upon by fellow soldiers on the other side.

Some have been used as human shields by their captors, according to humanitarian groups who have denounced the treatment of the prisoners as a violation of international

human rights conventions.

"I also had to dig graves," Dragan said, recounting his days in captivity reflected in his weakened body and hollow cheeks.

He said of the 110 prisoners held with him, 17 were killed by shots fired by their own side, and nearly all were injured.

"One of my friends was shot twice," he said. "He was treated and then sent back to work."

Dragan pauses for a moment and then adds: "In the end he

was killed."


The fighting in Mostar has been raging for seven months with Croats controlling the western part of the city and laying siege to the eastern Muslim sector where about 50,000 people are trapped. Soldiers from either side are often separated by less than 50 metres.

"When the snipers see the prisoners they aim at the shoulders, the arms or the hands," said one humanitarian official. "That way the prisoners become useless for the enemy."

Joso Peric, a 63-year-old pensioner, was taken prisoner by the Bosnian army in June and forced to dig bunkers for five months.

His ordeal ended a few days ago when he was ordered to retrieve a gasoline tank from an empty building and was injured in the stomach by shrapnel from a shell that exploded nearby.

He was later released and is now recovering in hospital. "I am waiting until I get better," said another injured soldier. "And then I will go back to the front to fight."

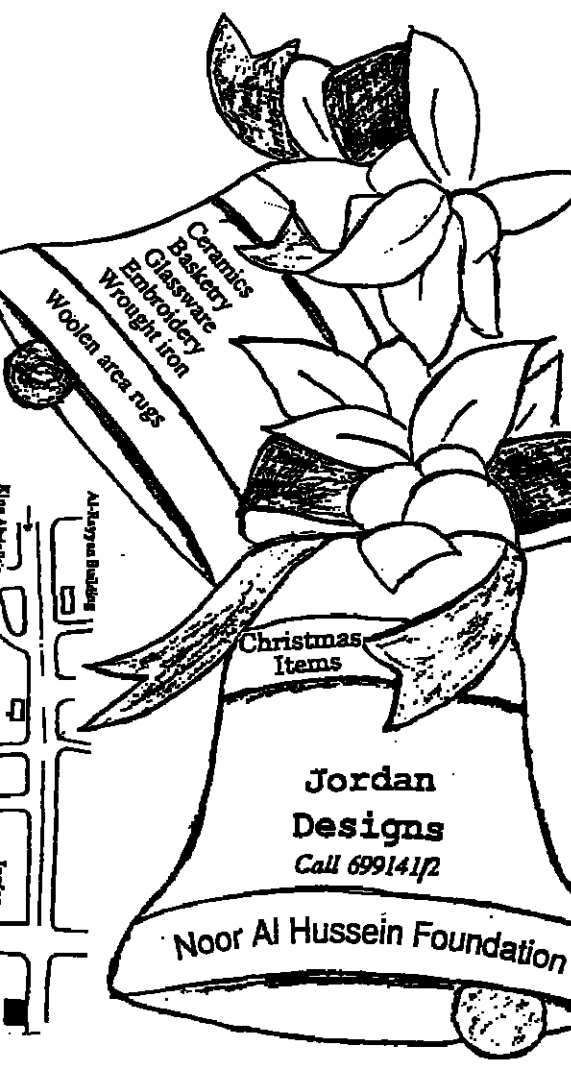
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# Social Security Corporation reforming investment programme

By Ian Atalla and  
Rozenn Hommey  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Social Security Corporation (SSC) is undergoing several reforms in its investment programme, and additional ones are planned, said Ahmad Al Sweiti, the assistant director general for investments at the SSC. But at the same time, the SSC is apparently regarded with no small amount of scepticism by some in Jordan's business circles.

"The SSC is well-known for making poor investments and losing money," a factory owner, who declined to be named, stated bluntly.

At the end of September 1993, the SSC's portfolio, totalling some JD 545 million, according to Mr. Sweiti, stood as follows: 14 per cent (JD 77.5 million) in equities, 32 per cent (JD 175 million) in loans and debt instruments, seven per cent in real estate, and 46 per cent in liquidity.

"The SSC's ratio of equities investment is very poor. It needs to be raised dramatically," said Ahmad Al Nammari,

a financial researcher.

"Over the last nine months we developed a new investment strategy," Mr. Sweiti said. "Over the next four years we hope to increase our equities ratio to 25 per cent and our real estate ratio to 12 per cent. We want to play a larger role in the development of Jordan's economy."

"But all this cannot happen overnight. As investors, changing the portfolio ratios does not mean that we hastily rush into new investments merely for the sake of diversifying, without finding good opportunities," he explained.

"As well," he added, "we need a high liquidity ratio to insure steady and rapid payments to our subscribers and the present yields to be found in equities here in Jordan are not very high."

In reference to the SSC's 46 per cent liquidity ratio, described by some economists as excessive, he also considered it high.

"We plan to reduce it over the next three to four years. In my estimation, our overall liquidity ratio should be 25 per cent for this stage in the SSC's development," he pointed out.

"But, remember that we must be, by the nature of our responsibilities, a conservative corporation," he said. He added that while the SSC is a public sector institution, it receives no financial support from the government and is responsible for covering all its operational expenses and its payments to subscribers and pensioners.

In addition, he noted, liquidity includes money instruments such as certificates of deposit (CD) and treasury bills, which are earning revenue and are not merely idle money.

Mr. Nammari, however, was critical: "The 46 per cent of the SSC's portfolio which is tied up in liquidity doesn't just represent overly conservative investing," he commented. "It reflects sheer irresponsibility. I welcome Mr. Sweiti's proposal to lower the ratio to 25 per cent, although this is still too high, in my opinion. But it will be difficult for him to do this as there is a close relationship between the SSC and Jordanian banks which influences the SSC's choice to keep a high ratio of deposits in the banks."

Mr. Nammari said that in his

judgment, the SSC should "only keep about 20 per cent of its portfolio as liquidity in bank deposits, CDs, etc."

There was also some criticism of the SSC's investment employees.

"To run an investments department which is handling such large sums of money," said the factory owner, "you need highly qualified people. They do not have them."

Mr. Sweiti explained that it was sometimes difficult for the SSC to compete head-on with private institutions in offering salaries and incentives to hire the best investment workers available. He said that for now, the SSC was seeking to strengthen its investment staff through improved training and that in the future "we would like to have more leeway to make investment decisions and boost incentives for employees and guarantee that we always have high-calibre people handling our investments, especially due to the critical nature of our role in Jordan."

However, said Mr. Nammari, "the SSC's history of poor investing cannot simply be blamed on its employees. The SSC's board of directors

has the full power to raise the salaries and incentives offered to SSC investment workers, under article 9A of the Social Security Law. But until now they have not. The responsibility for any problem rests squarely on their shoulders."

In addition, Mr. Nammari said, "when it comes to the SSC making investments, there are simply too many conflicts of interest on the part of those ultimately responsible for making the decisions."

An SSC employee, who preferred to remain anonymous, concurred.

"The SSC has to invest more carefully. There should be no considerations taken for any investment other than the investment itself."

Mr. Sweiti said that the SSC was aiming to improve its relationships with private business and increase its role in the private sector.

"Our role has been a modest one so far," he said. "We want to create a much closer relationship so that the private sector feels comfortable about accepting us as partners."

Mr. Nammari responded that in general, most business-

men and employers in Jordan had, for their own reasons and interests, long been opposed to the SSC "and have, from the beginning, tried to block every progressive proposal or plan for the social security system."

Lately, he added, a new generation of Jordanian businessmen with more open minds had come onto the scene, but their presence had not yet had a major impact on the Jordanian economy.

Mr. Sweiti mentioned that the SSC had recently launched a private company affiliated to the SSC, Sharikat Al Daman for Investments, with a starting capital of JD 10 million.

Most importantly, he said, it would be seen at large as mainly a private sector entity, and "when this is the case, other companies feel more comfortable about working with you, and it is easier to open up relationships with the private sector."

The ultimate goal, Mr. Sweiti said, was for the new company to stand as an intermediary for the SSC between the two sectors. In addition, he said, it would have more flexibility to act and

manoeuvre than a public organisation would.

In addition, Mr. Sweiti said, the SSC had lately begun to implement structural changes in its own investment department, which would now be split into three units, each with concise responsibilities: an equities department, also responsible for organising and promoting any new corporate investment projects, a financing and banking relations department, responsible for the SSC's liquidity and loan portfolios and a real estate department.

Mr. Nammari was critical of the SSC's launching of Sharikat Al Daman, saying that if the SSC really wanted to pursue more sophisticated private sector-style investing and cut back on bureaucratic restraints, as well as strengthen its ties with the private market, then the way to do that was through solid reforms inside the SSC's internal offices and not through a new company such as this, which he said was mainly a "cosmetic change and an unnecessary entity."

Mr. Sweiti said that there

had been calls for the SSC to increase its subscription fees to insure against eventual future risks in its payments to pensioners, but "we believe that we should try as much as possible for now not to increase the burden on our subscribers. And for the next ten years, at least, our financial position should be healthy."

Mr. Sweiti said the SSC was reevaluating its policies towards hotels and tourist rest houses which it owned.

"I feel that eventually we should be concentrating purely on investing, which is our real business, and not be in the business of managing hotels and rest houses ourselves."

He said that in the future, the SSC would continue to manage those locations which it was running profitably on its own and would contract private sector management to run the rest on the SSC's behalf, although the SSC would retain ownership of them.

In addition, he saw a need for the SSC to develop a more advanced information base for investment.

## OECD sees world economic growth picking up next year

PARIS (R) — World economic growth should start gathering pace next year but unemployment will continue to climb in the absence of serious reforms to the labour market, the OECD has said.

In its end-of-year outlook, the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) said it expected average growth of 2.1 per cent in its 24 member countries in the first half of 1994, accelerating to 2.7 per cent in the second half.

Economic growth in 1993 was an annualised 0.8 per cent in the first half and is seen at 1.4 per cent in the second half. But unemployment will climb to 8.5 per cent in the first half and 8.4 per cent in the second half of next year, from just over eight per cent this year, boosting the total number out of work to nearly 35 million people.

It urged countries to implement a range of labour market reforms to bring down the jobless rate, saying that economic growth alone would not be enough to put people back to work.

"Macroeconomic policies that promote economic recovery will help but the largest part of most countries' unemployment problems are structural in nature and require structural remedies," the think-tank for industrial nations said.

However, inflation is likely to continue to slow, falling to around three per cent or less

by 1995 and potentially recreating the kind of economic stability which underlay boom years in the 1960s.

"The emerging very favourable price situation, if sustained, will help to establish an economic environment more conducive to sustainable increases in productive investment, output and employment than has existed since the early 1960s," it said.

It added that lower interest rates and buoyant growth in some non-OECD countries, particularly in Asia, would underpin economic growth next year.

On future policies, it said that given a steady rise in public debt between 1979 and 1992, the 24 OECD countries had little room now to increase spending to boost growth and would have to rely instead on cutting interest rates.

"With little scope for expansionary macroeconomic action on the fiscal side, support for recovery in current circumstances must rely largely, if not solely, on monetary policy," the OECD pointed out.

In Europe in particular, budget deficits had increased so much in recent years that there was virtually no room to boost spending. Interest rates would have to come down further.

Countries whose interest rates are shadowing those in Germany could face an increasingly difficult situation in German rates continued to decline only slowly.

## Edward Deming, quality control expert, dies at 93

WASHINGTON (R) — W. Edwards Deming, the guru of quality control who helped Japan rebuild its industrial base following World War II, died at his Washington home early Monday of natural causes, an aide said. Deming was 93.

Deming remained active as a teacher and consultant until just before his death, travelling around the United States offering advice and seminars on quality control to businesses and business students.

Despite failing health, he had already pencilled in several dozen seminars for 1994, his office said.

Though he was revered in Japan, Deming always felt slighted in his own country, believing that with few exceptions American manufacturers spurned his theories.

In his seminars and scholarly works, he urged management to pay close attention to workers' ideas and complaints, and to regularly and continuously work to improve all operations.

"Improve constantly and forever the system of production and service," he wrote in his "14 points for management."

"Put everybody in the company to work to accomplish the transformation," he wrote.

He was born Oct. 14, 1900, in Sioux City, Iowa.

After earning an advanced degree, he worked for 18 years as an obscure federal government mathematician and statistician, where he first began developing techniques to im-

prove the quality and efficiency of business procedures.

Following the war, General Douglas MacArthur asked Deming to travel to Japan to help conduct a census and assess the country's ability to rebuild.

Deming soon was touring the Japanese countryside, lecturing corporations on how to assure efficient operations and reliable products.

Japanese manufacturers honoured him in 1960 by creating the annual Deming prize. In June 1987, then-president Ronald Reagan honoured him

with the National Medal of Technology.

In the early 1980s, he was hired by Ford Motor Co.'s then-president, Donald Peterson, to help improve the quality of Ford automobiles.

In a statement issued Monday, Ford said Deming had been instrumental in guiding the company's quality efforts.

"He motivated thousands of Ford Motor Company employees through the numerous seminars on quality he con-

ducted," the automaker said in a statement.

Deming wrote several books and 170 scholarly papers. Also a music scholar, he wrote two masses and several canticles and anthems.

During his multi-decade career as a consultant, his clients included railways, telephone companies, trucking firms, manufacturing firms, hospitals, law firms, government agencies and universities.

## Beijing slaps price controls on 27 goods

BEIJING (R) — With urban inflation becoming a serious problem for China, the capital Beijing slapped price controls on 27 major commodities that had explosive price rises the past week, the official China Daily said Tuesday.

The controls cover daily necessities from rice to pork. The prices of grain, rice, cooking oil, pork and eggs rose between 30 to 40 per cent over the last week in the capital, the newspaper said.

China is extremely concerned about urban inflation, which hit an annual 21.9 per cent in November.

Economic supremo Zhu Rongji this week declared that "stabilising the grain price and inflation... are key to smooth implementation of next year's reforms."

Mr. Zhu's remarks, first broadcast on state radio and television Monday, appeared on the front pages of major newspapers Tuesday in a sign the Communist Party considers the matter to be extremely

urgent.

Runaway inflation the last time China's economy overheated was one of the causes of the pro-democracy demonstrations in Beijing's Tiananmen Square which were crushed by the army on June 4, 1989.

China's leaders have declared they are determined to bring the current economic boom to a "soft landing."

So far, however, two consecutive years of 13 per cent economic growth show no signs of abating.

With the economy caught in the transition period between socialism and market-style freedom, the fast growth is causing dislocations and bottlenecks.

"There's always a big burden on urban residents like me," said a young woman who works for the government.

"The prices have gone up too high," said a middle-aged man. "When my wife told me the price of rice, I just didn't believe her. I went out to see

for myself and she was right."

Beijing, vice mayor Wang Baosen assured residents there is no shortage of grain, meat and vegetables, and he said shops that raised prices beyond state limits would be punished.

China abolished price controls on grain and cooking oil only this past May. A system of grain rationing that existed for more than 40 years was abolished and all residents had to face the laws of the free marketplace.

Now Beijing has decided to put the controls back on, at least temporarily.

"Through stabilising the market prices, we can ease the pain on residents who go shopping during the new year and the spring festival," said Beijing Communist Party Secretary Chen Xitong.

Spring festival, the lunar new year, is the time for the year's major buying spree for most Chinese. It is in early February. Officials are blaming this

year's huge price rises on misunderstandings about economic reforms.

Many farmers have not handed in their grain yet in anticipation of higher prices next year. In addition, consumers, worried that Jan. 1 tax reforms would fuel inflation, started their buying early. Shops raised their prices in response.

Mr. Zhu, vice premier and head of the central bank, promised China's bold market-style economic reforms would not mean an end to affordable food.

"The large increase in the price of grain at the end of November was abnormal, transient and caused by psychological factors," he said.

"There are no market economies in the world that do not completely ignore prices in the marketplace, especially the price of grain, which is a basic part of people's lives and social stability," Mr. Zhu said.

## Peanuts



## Andy Capp

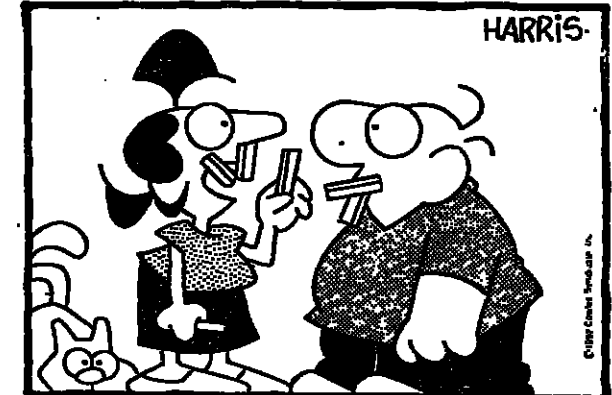


## Mutt'n'Jeff



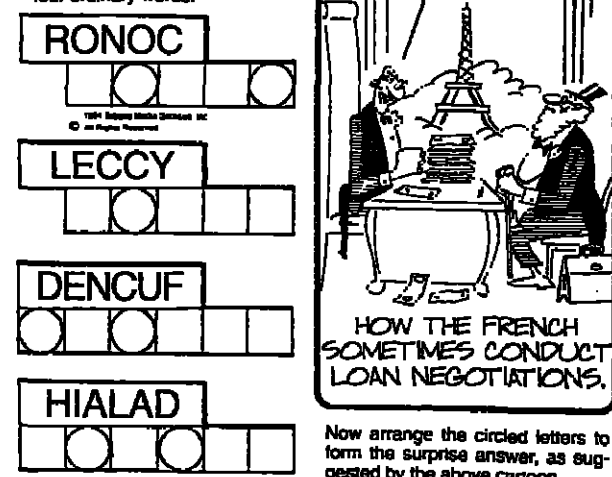
## THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



## JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Print answer here: "\_\_\_\_\_" (Answers Monday)  
Yesterday's Jumbles: JUICE, FRUIT, UNLOAD, JACKAL  
Answer: That crazy magician seemed to lack this — A FULL DECK

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 22, 1993  
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

**GENERAL TENDENCIES:** Refuse to get involved in any petty details or squabbles at work that are proving annoying to others. In the evening arrange a detailed course of action whereby you have happiness and more effective.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Your affairs today include your relations with those about you who are in need of some encouragement and realization that they are really loved.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) Think about what you can do to be of greater service to whom ever you know who is having a difficult time and in which case you become a real humanitarian.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) A day to decide the various persons you wish to see during the holidays and to make plans to be with them at social affairs you all enjoy.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) Home matters should have the greatest amount of your attention so get your residence in perfect condition for the holidays ahead.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) You need to get those last minute duties and shopping done what you have put off and pursue to do it even though there is a Christmas rush to deal with.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) Good to first analyse your assets and liabilities, then

decide just how much you can spend and for what purpose so as not to drain your resources.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) Your day to decide your own part which you can best play in the high drama of this holiday season and get yourself in the pink of condition to do so.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) The behind the scenes and intimate matters you have not gotten attention to can be approached and put behind you in an efficient manner now.

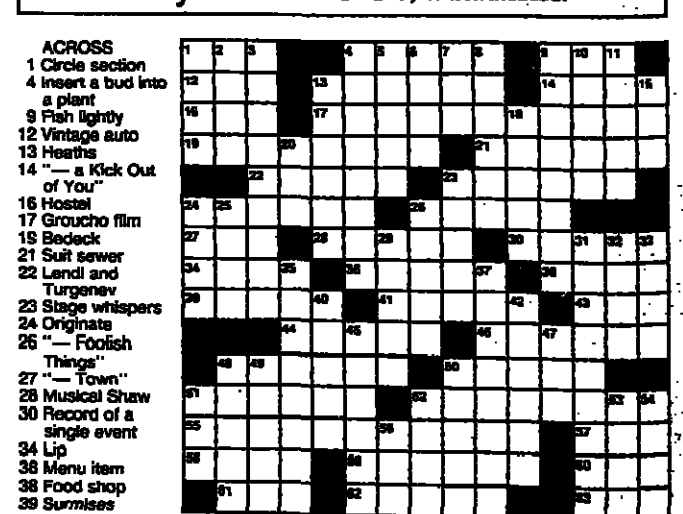
**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) A day to consider your friends and acquaintances needs rather than some four-four present in getting something to remember the season by.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) Get out in the world and handle those holiday problems that have built up and require some special thought and action and you do well.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) You have some new comers in your life that you want to impress and it will require more than usual focus upon their desire to please them.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Rely upon your best judgment and not your intuitive perception in making any important holiday decisions whether for companions or of a business nature.

## THE Daily Crossword by Wilson McEath



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Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

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هكذا صحت الاشياء



## South Africa opens first arms export office in UAE

ABU DHABI (AFP) — South Africa, back in the Middle East after a boycott lasting decades, has set up its first international arms office in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to break into the lucrative market in the region.

Office director Peter Greeling said the state-owned weapons giant Armscor opened the office in Abu Dhabi last month and it covered the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and other countries in the Middle East.

"It is South Africa's first arms office in the world," Mr. Greeling told AFP. "It will coordinate arms sales to the region and identify opportunities for military cooperation."

The project coincides with plans by GCC states to bolster their armies following the Gulf war. Military experts said the six members were expected to spend more than \$5 billion annually on defence up to the year 2000.

The United States, France and Britain will probably be the main beneficiaries of such plans, as they already dominate the Middle East arms market.

However, South Africa participated in a ground arms show in Abu Dhabi early this year and sent representatives of more than 30 companies to an international air show in Dubai last month to exhibit helicopters and other air de-

fence systems.

South African officials said they were negotiating with some Gulf countries to sell the Rooivalk, one of the most advanced helicopters in the world.

"We are optimistic about deals," Mr. Greeling said. "We are not competitive in some types of weapons because ours are expensive. But we are competitive in artillery, which is the best in the world. We also have the Rooivalk."

The GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE — lifted the boycott against South Africa two years ago after sweeping reforms by President F.W. de Klerk to dismantle apartheid.

Several GCC officials have visited Pretoria, while South African delegations have gone to the Gulf to discuss economic cooperation and investment.

South Africa opened its first Gulf embassy in Bahrain last month and is planning to set up a commercial centre in Dubai to promote exports.

Bilateral trade has risen dramatically since they normalised ties, exceeding \$30 million in the first nine months of 1993. According to official figures trade was negligible while sanctions were in force, and most exchanges involved secret arms and oil deals.

International isolation during apartheid prompted South Africa to develop its own military industries, with arms production reaching nearly \$2 billion in 1992.

"We have become major arms exporters, although we did not have arms offices around the world. We used to send marketeers to visit countries wishing to buy weapons from South Africa," Mr. Greeling said.

## Low oil prices not to hit Iran plans, Rafsanjani says

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani Tuesday presented the annual budget bill and a five-year plan to parliament and said Iran could continue its development plan despite low oil prices.

"Iran is not reliant on crude oil prices as other petroleum exporting countries are," the Iranian news agency IRNA quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as telling parliament.

Iran could continue with its development plans regardless of oil prices, he was quoted as saying.

Iran, which has been earning about 85 per cent of its hard cash from crude oil sales in recent years, has been hit hard by the 30 per cent fall in oil prices this year.

Parliament Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri was quoted as saying Monday that the legislature wanted to post-

pone the start of the five-year plan for a year, "because one cannot study a plan in a crisis."

The budget and the plan, which is Iran's second five-year development plan since the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, are both for periods starting March 21, 1994.

The plan sets total government expenditure of 238.5 trillion riyals — the equivalent of \$151.9 billion at the assumed exchange rate of 1,570 riyals per dollar, and 26.6 per cent more than the first plan's approved total.

Oil revenue is to meet 51 per cent of the total, or \$77.5 billion, according to planning chief Massoud Roshani Zanjani.

Mr. Rafsanjani said Iran had reduced its reliance on oil and urged parliament deputies and the media to focus on the achievements of the first plan and "avoid solely magnifying

the existing economic problems," IRNA said.

Critics say the first plan has failed in major areas including promoting industrial exports and privatisation, and that the recent oil price fall highlighted just how dependent Iran's economy still was on the commodity.

Iranian officials said the country has \$8 billion in arrears in its commercial debts out of a total \$28 billion of foreign commitments.

A set of guidelines for the second plan by supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to Mr. Rafsanjani, reported by IRNA on Monday, called for measures to "prevent the nation's relying on foreign loans, and striving to gradually get rid of outstanding obligations."

Mr. Rafsanjani said Ayatollah Khamenei's views were incorporated in the plan. But it was not immediately clear

whether provisions for using foreign credit had been kept in the blueprint.

The first draft of the plan before it was discussed in the cabinet, authorised the government to seek up to \$2.4 billion in long-term foreign loans to build four dams.

Next year's budget sets total government expenditure at 33.8 billion riyals, 32.9 per cent more than the current year's approved level.

The expenditure figure is equal to \$21.3 billion at the plan's assumed exchange rate, but converted at Tuesday's bank rate of 1,751 riyals per dollar it would amount to \$19.5 billion.

Tehran Radio quoted Mr. Rafsanjani as saying the plan envisaged average annual growth of between 5.4 per cent and 6.0 per cent in the gross domestic product.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
BOSTON BANK CENTER AMMAN - SUNSET				
ORGANIZED MARKET INDEX PRICE LIST FOR 21/12/1993				
COMPANY'S NAME	TRADED VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ABD BANK	70,340	185.000	185.000	184.500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	820	6.250	6.250	6.200
STATE OF JORDAN	2,276	4.250	4.250	4.250
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	14,880	2.030	2.030	2.020
INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT BANK	22,486	4.000	4.000	4.000
THE JORDANIAN BANK	10,454	5.880	5.880	5.850
JORDAN TRADING BANK	74,320	3.110	3.110	3.170
JORDAN GULF BANK	5,494	1.640	1.640	1.640
JORDAN TRADING BANK	5,361	4.430	4.430	4.420
JORDAN TRADING BANK	19,657	4.780	4.780	4.780
JORDAN TRADING BANK	12,889	7.080	7.080	7.060
JORDAN TRADING BANK	2,273	4.800	4.700	4.780
JORDAN TRADING BANK	31,236	1.800	1.790	1.790
JORDAN TRADING BANK	2,066	4.650	4.650	4.650
JORDAN TRADING BANK	3,189	2.410	2.400	2.410
JORDAN TRADING BANK	9,641	3.610	3.600	3.610
JORDAN TRADING BANK	630	3.150	3.150	3.150
JORDAN TRADING BANK	800	3.000	3.000	3.000
JORDAN TRADING BANK	86,893	2.320	2.300	2.330
JORDAN TRADING BANK	2,744	4.700	4.680	4.680
JORDAN TRADING BANK	849	0.740	0.730	0.730
JORDAN TRADING BANK	3,970	1.150	1.150	1.150
JORDAN TRADING BANK	480	1.410	1.400	1.400
JORDAN TRADING BANK	2,700	1.350	1.350	1.350
JORDAN TRADING BANK	24,418	2.210	2.190	2.200
JORDAN TRADING BANK	207,283	3.080	3.080	3.080
JORDAN TRADING BANK	2,181	19.000	19.300	19.300
JORDAN TRADING BANK	4,096	10.700	10.700	10.710
JORDAN TRADING BANK	299	7.400	7.400	7.400
JORDAN TRADING BANK	31,642	8.200	8.200	8.200
JORDAN TRADING BANK	2,744	1.110	1.100	1.100
JORDAN TRADING BANK	7,240	1.830	1.830	1.830
JORDAN TRADING BANK	10,821	2.880	2.880	2.880
JORDAN TRADING BANK	1,484	0.580	0.580	0.580
JORDAN TRADING BANK	2,614	15.300	15.300	15.300
JORDAN TRADING BANK	11,010	2.450	2.450	2.450
JORDAN TRADING BANK	75,210	10.200	10.200	10.200
JORDAN TRADING BANK	4,024	1.590	1.580	1.580
JORDAN TRADING BANK	2,217	0.850	0.850	0.850
JORDAN TRADING BANK	8,555	5.100	5.050	5.050
JORDAN TRADING BANK	2,980	2.800	2.800	2.800
JORDAN TRADING BANK	1,298	2.240	2.240	2.240
JORDAN TRADING BANK	29,272	7.000	7.000	7.000
JORDAN TRADING BANK	14,020	4.500	4.500	4.500
JORDAN TRADING BANK	7,250	1.110	1.100	1.100
JORDAN TRADING BANK	1,000	0.770	0.770	0.770
JORDAN TRADING BANK	35,907	7.970	7.970	7.950
JORDAN TRADING BANK	2,001	1.320	1.320	1.320
JORDAN TRADING BANK	2,201	1.380	1.380	1.370
JORDAN TRADING BANK	1,512	2.430	2.430	2.430
JORDAN TRADING BANK	17,299	3.400	3.400	3.420
GRAND TOTAL	1,120,976			
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET				
TRADED VOLUME IN THE PARALLEL MARKET				
	113,472			
	143,568			

## Financial Markets

U.S. Dollar in International Markets			
Currency	New York Close 20/12/93	Tokyo Close 21/12/93	
Sterling Pound	1.4865	1.4875	
Deutsche Mark	1.7129	1.7113	
Swiss Franc	1.4580	1.4550	
French Franc	5.8360	5.8180**	
Japanese Yen	110.60	110.75	
European Currency Unit	1.1288	1.1315**	

Eurocurrency Interest Rates				
Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.18	3.25	3.31	3.62
Sterling Pound	5.68	5.43	5.19	5.06
Deutsche Mark	6.43	6.12	5.75	5.31
Swiss Franc	4.43	4.12	3.93	3.68
French Franc	6.59	6.44	6.03	5.56
Japanese Yen	2.31	2.00	1.81	1.81
European Currency Unit	6.81	6.37	6.00	5.62

Precious Metals				
Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz
Gold	388.25	7.50	Silver	5.11
				0.115

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin		
Date: 21/12/1993		
Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7020	0.7040
Sterling Pound	1.0432	1.0484
Deutsche Mark	0.4098	0.4118
Swiss Franc	0.4820	0.4844
French Franc	0.1203	0.1209
Japanese Yen	0.6330	0.6362
Dutch Guilder	0.3662	0.3680
Swedish Krona	*****	*****
Italian Lira	0.0419	0.0421
Belgian Franc	*****	*****

Other Currencies		
Date: 21/12/1993		
Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8370	1.8710
Lebanese Lira	0.040575	0.041635
Saudi Riyal	0.1855	0.1885
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2250	2.3200
Qatari Riyal	0.1902	0.1916
Egyptian Pound	0.2050	0.2220
Omani Riyal	1.7900	1.8250
UAE Dirham	0.1902	0.1916
Greek Drachma	0.2815	0.3245
Cypriot Pound	1.5475	1.3965

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## U.N. suspends Sarajevo airlift

**SARAJEVO (Agencies)** — The United Nations suspended its humanitarian airlift to Sarajevo Tuesday after one of its planes was hit by heavy machinegun fire while landing in the besieged Bosnian capital the previous day.

"The humanitarian airlift of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been suspended, we don't know for how long," said U.N. spokesman Major Idesbald Van Biesebroeck.

In Geneva, UNHCR spokesman Ron Redmond said the aid effort would be resumed only when there were assurances there would be no more such incidents.

He said the suspension was ordered in the wake of Monday's shooting "and a number of other serious incidents over the past few weeks."

The decision was taken reluctantly, he said, adding: "The airlift is absolutely crucial to keep this city alive."

He said a Soviet-made Ilyushin 76 transport plane operated by the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia was hit by six bullets, damaging its fuel tanks.

A U.N. spokesman in Zagreb said the bullets pierced a wing and entered the cabin area but the flight crew escaped injury.

Repairs were made on the ground and the plane took off for its return flight to Zagreb

successfully. Maj. Van Biesebroeck said the shots appeared to come from Ilidza, a Serb-controlled western suburb of Sarajevo but he declined to blame any one of Bosnia's warring factions for the incident.

Fierce fighting between Muslim-led government troops and rebel Serb forces erupted in Sarajevo's western suburbs Tuesday, further endangering the airlift whose planes swoop low over the battlefield area while taking off and landing.

The U.N. spokesman said 118 artillery impacts had been recorded in the suburbs of Stup and Rajlovac between 5 a.m. and 8 a.m. Tuesday and fierce fighting continued late into the morning.

Asked about the significance of the fighting, Maj. Van Biesebroeck replied: "It's difficult to assess. It's probably just a show of force, harassment, before the (Geneva) talks begin."

Stup, formerly a Croat suburb, has been largely destroyed in months of fighting. Muslim and Serb forces each hold parts of the town, which flanks the airport road along which all of Sarajevo's relief supplies must travel.

Meanwhile, leaders from former Yugoslavia began a new push Tuesday to reach a pre-Christmas peace agreement in Bosnia, with international mediator Lord Owen

expressing qualified confidence on the outcome.

Bosnia's rebel Serb leader Radovan Karadzic was also in upbeat mood, saying: "This time I think we can make it."

But Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban and the republic's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic both said they saw little chance of success.

Lord Owen said he was "fairly confident... I hope so, anyway," when he and co-mediator Thorvald Stoltenberg opened a day of talks at Geneva's Palais Des Nations.

Also taking part were President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia and Franjo Tudjman of Croatia. The mediators were hoping that the two, at a key meeting Tuesday morning, could agree on a new territorial offer to break the deadlock.

On Wednesday, the Bosnian leaders and the mediators will go to Brussels to meet European Community foreign ministers, who are pressing hard for a rapid agreement to end the Bosnian war, now 20 months old.

The mediators and the EC are insisting that the Muslims be given at least one third of the Balkan republic in a proposed three-way split. In return they are prepared to gradually ease United Nations sanctions on Serbia.

In a separate development, President Milosevic's Socialist Party was only four seats short of an absolute majority in parliament Tuesday, with four-fifths of the votes counted, the Electoral Commission said.

The commission said the Socialists with 48.8 per cent of the vote had secured 122 seats in the 250-seat assembly, followed by the opposition liberal coalition DEPOS with 44 seats and 17.6 per cent, the ultra-nationalist Radical Party with 40 seats and 16 per cent and the Democratic Party with 29 seats (11.6 per cent).

The Democratic Party of Serbia had seven seats from 2.8 per cent, the Democratic Union representing ethnic Hungarians in Vojvodina five from two per cent and the Democratic Action Party of Albanians in southern Serbia three from 1.2 per cent.

Turnout in Sunday's polling was around 70 per cent, Election Commission Chairman Zoran Junic said.

The Socialists have increased their share of the vote as counting has progressed, and were already claiming an absolute majority Monday.

Their showing is a vast improvement on last year's elections, when they only obtained 28.77 per cent of the vote and 101 seats, despite an appalling economic situation as a result of an international embargo against Serbia.

## Efforts to woo S. Africa's right stall

**CAPE TOWN (R)** — Last-ditch talks to draw right wingers into South Africa's transition to black majority rule stalled in Cape Town Tuesday.

Lack of progress there prompted white Afrikaners to put off signing an agreement in Johannesburg that they had reached earlier with the African National Congress (ANC).

The ANC, saying it did not want to take over a country under fire, said it understood the concerns of Afrikaners who are demanding a homeland in post-apartheid South Africa.

Afrikaner People's Front (APF) leader General Constand Viljoen told a news conference in Johannesburg that the right-wing Freedom Alliance involved in the separate talks could have collapsed if he had signed the accord with the ANC to study an Afrikaner homeland.

Gen. Viljoen's front is part of the five-member alliance which has been holding talks with the ANC and the government over whether to take part in the process leading to a country's first non-racial elections next April 27.

Freedom Alliance legislator Tom Langley said they had been unable to reach agreement at the last-minute talks in Cape Town, but had set up a committee to look for a breakthrough.

The alliance of black and white federalists demands regional autonomy in a post-apartheid South Africa and is boycotting preparations for the election.

The white-dominated parliament is due to vote Wednesday on a draft constitution for the transition to majority rule.

"The ANC were, as always, arrogant and uncompromising as if the country belongs to them and them alone," Mr. Langley said.

Gen. Viljoen, commenting on the front's decision to postpone the signing of a "interim strategic agreement" with the ANC on the Afrikaner's right to a post-apartheid homeland, said:

"We feel betrayed, we feel very sorry. The people in Cape Town are not taking us seriously."

ANC Assistant Secretary-General Jacob Zuma accepted the APF decision, saying it was important that white Afrikaner concerns should be addressed.

"An ANC government would not like to take over a country under fire. That's why this problem has to be resolved," he said at a joint news conference.

Mr. Zuma said the ANC had also agreed the time was not ripe to sign the agreement with the APF.

A member of Zulu chief

Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party, one of the Freedom Alliance members, said the alliance had been willing Tuesday to drop its demand for separate national and regional ballots in return for greater flexibility on demands for regional autonomy.

Mr. Langley said specific issues were not discussed in Cape Town as the three parties wrangled about a joint government and an ANC demand for an up-front commitment from the alliance to participate in, or facilitate, the election if their demands were met.

He said the ANC demand had been framed in terms designed to insult right-wing leaders. "It reflects on our integrity. What they want is something to humiliate us and to trample on us."

Gen. Viljoen in Johannesburg told reporters he remained committed to the agreement with the ANC though would not go ahead until "the political impasse to Cape Town has been resolved."

Mr. Zuma addressed the news conference with a note of optimism.

"We believed and we still believe that this agreement sends a clear message to all South Africans that we can reach a settlement without going the route of the blood-bath," he said.

## Hunter who shot lynx agrees to find another

**DUBAI (R)** — A hunter who shot dead a rare lynx in the mountains of the United Arab Emirates has agreed to try to find its mate to start a captive breeding programme, a daily newspaper said Tuesday. The hunter tracked and shot the male caracal lynx because it was preying on domestic goats, the Emirates News said. The Arabian Leopard Trust suggested he capture its mate to help preserve the species in captivity and the hunter welcomed the idea, it added. The trust is a non-governmental organisation trying to preserve wildlife.

## Mother comes out of coma to hold baby girl

**LONDON (AFP)** — A young mother who gave birth while in a coma after a car accident has recovered sufficiently to meet the baby girl she never knew existed, and should be able to spend Christmas with her, doctors said here Monday. Melanie Douglas, 22, suffered a fractured skull and brain damage when she was hit by a car in January near her home close to Birmingham, England. When she was taken to hospital, doctors discovered she was eight weeks pregnant. "Melanie started to come out of the coma when she went into labour," and gave birth, nine weeks premature, in June, her mother Marie Langley said. When she was allowed to hold her baby daughter for the first time, "she just beamed all over her face," her mother said. The young mother can talk fully but is still partially paralysed. She will be able to spend Christmas at home with her daughter before resuming rehabilitation at a head injuries unit, doctors said.

## 3 hurt in crash with Christmas tree thieves

**ANTWERP, Belgium (AFP)** — Three people were injured when thieves with a stolen Christmas tree in their jeep jumped several red lights and collided with two other cars near here, police said. One of the injured men was in the getaway car. Police said the thieves took off in a hurry with their lights off after officers surprised them while they were loading a large pine tree which they had stolen from a suburban shop into their jeep. Two of the injured, including the one in the thieves' car, were hospitalised.

## Thieves rob old woman, then call for help

**SYDNEY (R)** — Two masked thieves bound, gagged and robbed an 83-year-old woman in her Sydney home Tuesday before dialling an emergency number for her and calling for help, Australian police said. The men forced open a window and woke the woman in the middle of the night. They took several hundred dollars from her purse, bound her with tape and tied her to the bed, a spokesman said. They disconnected her telephone but later called an emergency number from another phone to get her help. Police said the woman was shaken but not harmed during the robbery.

## Thai dog nurses tiger cubs

**BANGKOK (R)** — A Thai dog has successfully nursed two tiger cubs that were refused milk by their mother, the Nation newspaper reported Tuesday. Thongkham nursed the cubs along with her own six puppies at a zoo in Lop Buri, 150 kilometres north of Bangkok, the newspaper said. "She is a very kind dog and has a good heart," the paper quoted Thongkham's owner as saying.

## 1st Japanese woman ordained as priest

**WELLINGTON (AFP)** — At first Junko Monica Preston's husband couldn't believe his wife's ambition, but she was determined to be the first Japanese woman to become an Anglican priest. Preston is now priest-assistant at the Wellington Cathedral of Saint Paul where earlier this month she was ordained by Archbishop Brian Davis. "The archbishop saw my calling and encouraged me," she said Tuesday. Preston arrived in New Zealand from England in 1989 with her husband Thomas, a former British diplomat. "Tom is very supportive — he couldn't believe it when I first said I was called, but he fully appreciates it now."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Poll: Clinton's approval rating up

**WASHINGTON (R)** — A new poll said President Bill Clinton's approval rating has jumped nine points in the past month, largely because of his handling of the economy. The ABC News/Washington Post poll said 58 per cent of Americans approve of the way Mr. Clinton is handling his job, up from 49 per cent Nov. 14. At the same time, the president's rating on the economy jumped 10 points in a month, to 53 per cent, the poll said. A statement from ABC News said this jump "seems largely responsible for Mr. Clinton's overall positive ratings." The poll also noted that Mr. Clinton got a good score on the way he is dealing with the situation in Russia, with 68 per cent approving. The ABC News/Washington Post poll was based on telephone interviews with 1,000 adults from Dec. 15-19, a few days after a parliamentary election in Russia produced surprisingly strong support for Communist and ultra-nationalist parties. The poll had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 per cent.

### France moves closer to NATO

**PARIS (AFP)** — France is returning to the bosom of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), but by decree and on condition the Atlantic alliance reforms itself. For the first time since President Charles de Gaulle pulled his country out of NATO's integrated command in 1966, Paris is considering having its defence minister and armed forces chief of staff take part in NATO deliberations. Defence Minister Francois Leleu said Sunday. The move is prompted by increasing NATO involvement in peacekeeping operations, such as in Yugoslavia, where France is heavily committed. "It is entirely normal that the defence minister sits in on" the NATO council "and the Joint Chief of Staff in the military committee when the subject can affect France and its armed forces," said Mr. Leleu. New NATO missions, notably in peacekeeping, and the increased role in Europe in the alliance will be the main themes of a special NATO summit scheduled for Jan. 10 in Brussels.

### IRA injures 2 in Belfast bomb

**BELFAST (R)** — The IRA wounded two people in a Belfast bomb attack Monday night to warn Britain that the guerrillas have yet to end their 25-year war and accept an Anglo-Irish peace package. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) quickly claimed responsibility for the bombing, the first time it has admitted an attack since Britain and Ireland unveiled three peace plan last Wednesday. The plan calls on the IRA and Protestant extremists to lay down their arms in return for a place at peace talks and recognition that people in both Northern Ireland and Ireland should determine the future of the troubled province. A soldier and a civilian were injured in Monday's attack, the second major bomb in Northern Ireland since British Prime Minister John Major and Irish Premier Albert Reynolds launched their initiative last Wednesday.

### Aristide talks with U.S. officials

**WASHINGTON (R)** — Ousted Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide held talks Monday on ways to restore democracy to his country and a top U.S. official urged him to reconsider a "national reconciliation" confession. Mr. Aristide, the Caribbean nation's first democratically elected president, met officials from the United States, France, Canada and Venezuela Monday to try to break Haiti's political deadlock. "We discussed the current diplomatic situation and explored with President Aristide the ways that the current impasse might be resolved," State Department spokeswoman Christian Shelly said at a briefing. In the Haitian capital, radio stations quoted remarks from what they said was a highly critical letter from Haiti Prime Minister Robert Malval to Mr. Aristide a day before the prime minister tendered his resignation last week. The radio reports quoted Mr. Malval as accusing Mr. Aristide of lacking trust in his own prime minister and repeatedly promising to support an initiative only to change his mind, withdraw support, or fail to carry through.

## Prince Edward begs press to lay off him, girlfriend

**LONDON (R)** — Prince Edward asked Britain's media to leave him and his new girlfriend alone, but her likeness to Princess Diana appears to have boosted interest in the new face on the royal scene.

Queen Elizabeth's youngest son pleaded for privacy in a rare letter to editors and urged them not to hound Sophie Rhys-Jones after their relationship was unveiled at the weekend.

Photographers and reporters have pursued her, delighted that her blonde bob hairstyle smile and gait bring instant reminders of Prince Edward's sister-in-law, Diana, who bowed-out from public life last week saying she could not take the media pressure.

"Me and my Di," read the headline in Tuesday's tabloid Daily Star. The Sun called her "Di-dential."

"She's a commoner but already she's got the royal touch." Today newspaper said of the 28-year-old public relations consultant. "She looks like Di and now she speaks like her."

Facing a dearth of Di stories, the appearance of Ms. Rhys-Jones seemed too good to be true for tabloid editors, until the prince sent them all a fax asking them to leave the pair alone.

The balding bachelor prince, 29, said he wanted to stop the press "destroying that part of my life that I am entitled to regard as private and, more importantly, Sophie's life."

"We are not planning to get married — we only met each other in the last few months — but we are good friends. If this changes, we will let you know in a proper and formal manner," he said to scotch rumours



Prince Edward gestures to the waiting media as he leaves his office late Monday (AFP photo)

that a summer wedding was planned.

In a direct reference to the broken marriages of his brothers Prince Charles and Prince Andrew, Prince Edward said media scrutiny of his family had "not been at all beneficial to their relationships."

"Please will you call an end to your harassment of both Sophie and me and allow us to try to carry on our lives as normal," he said, appealing to the spirit of Christmas goodwill.

Prince Edward sent the message by fax from the offices of the new television production he has set up but when he tried to leave work he found his car trapped by photographers' vehicles.

The constant glare of publicity was partly blamed for the break-up last year of Diana's 1981 marriage to her to the throne Prince Charles, and for the separation 18 months ago of Prince Andrew and flame-haired Sarah Ferguson, known as Fergie.

The paper that enraged Princess Diana by showing sneaked pictures of her working out in a gym said it would respect

Prince Edward's wishes.

"Naturally the Daily Mirror would not dream of harassing him or his friend Sophie Rhys-Jones," editor David Banks said. "We will not be pointing cameras over fences or through hedges."

Its circulation rival, the Sun, advised Prince Edward to learn from his brothers' mistake to make sure his relationship went well.

The shy Prince Edward has until now escaped much of the royal spotlight, despite being described as a "wimp" for quitting the tough Royal Marines in 1987 for a job in the theatre.

In 1990 he was forced to deny persistent rumours he was homosexual despite having dated a string of actresses, European princesses and television personalities.

He and Ms. Rhys-Jones are said to have met at a charity tennis event and to have spent weekends at Buckingham Palace together.

The queen is reported to have met her son's girlfriend, and royal watchers say the couple will join the rest of the royal family at Sandringham for New Year celebrations.

## S. Korea makes major cabinet changes

**SEOUL (R)** — South Korea's President Kim Young-Sam replaced 14 ministers Tuesday in a sweeping cabinet reshuffle designed to restore his credibility after breaking election campaign promises to bar rice imports.

In the biggest shake-up of the 24-member cabinet since he became the nation's first civilian president in more than three decades in February, Mr. Kim dismissed his chief economic planner as well as ministers of defence, unification, interior and agriculture.

The way for the reshuffle was set Thursday when Hwang In-Sung resigned as prime minister, saying he was taking the blame for failing to prevent the rice market opening.

He was replaced the same day by Lee Hoi-Chang, who has spearheaded Mr. Kim's anti-corruption drive.

Transport Minister Chung Jai-Suk will replace Mr. Lee Kyung-Shick as new deputy premier and head of the economic planning board.

Mr. Chung's promotion made room at transport for Oh Myung, former communications minister and chief organiser of the 1993 Taejon World Expo.

Contrary to expectations, Mr. Kim retained Finance Minister Hong Jae-Hyong and Trade

Minister Kim Chul-Su, moves seen by analysts as demonstrating his desire to maintain current economic policies.

Local news media had speculated most of Mr. Kim's key economic ministers would be replaced to spread the blame for the rice market opening under the GATT world trade deal, which provoked widespread protests by farmers and students.

A presidential spokesman said Tuesday's cabinet shake-up was made "to cope with new economic order following the settlement of Uruguay round of trade talks."

He said Mr. Kim would continue his administrative reforms and the cabinet would be asked to make the country more competitive internationally.

The new unification minister will be Lee Yung-Dag, a professor at a Seoul University who once served as a chief negotiator in talks with the Communist North.

Mr. Kim retained Foreign Minister Han Sang-Joo and Kim Deok, head of the Agency for National Security Planning, the spokesman said.

Rhee Byung-Tae, a former general who previously headed the Agency for Patriots and Veterans Affairs, will become the new defence minister in place of Kwon Young-Hae.

The Defence Ministry has recently been under fire for an alleged multimillion dollar arms procurement swindle.

The president has ordered a thorough probe into the case, in which a foreign arms dealer was alleged to have defrauded the ministry of \$6.67 million by failing to deliver ammunition paid for by a branch of the Korea Exchange Bank in Paris.

Hyung-Woo-Woo, a five-term legislator regarded as one of Mr. Kim's closest confidants, will become the new interior minister, replacing Lee Hae-Koo.

Among others dropped from the cabinet were Agriculture Minister Hun Shin-Haeng, Labour Minister Rhee In-Je, Construction Minister Koh Byung-Woo, Education Minister Oh Byung-Moon and Environment Minister Whang San-Sung.

Mr. Kim, who has pursued a tough campaign to clean up corruption and administrative abuses, is expected to extend his administrative shakeup to the top ranks of his ruling Democratic Liberal Party.

Four senior party officials, including Secretary-General Hwang Myung-Soo, tendered their resignations Monday, clearing the way for a reshuffle.



Sophie Rhys-Jones, latest girlfriend of Prince Edward, gets into her car after leaving her London office (AFP photo)



## Celebrations and gloom follow World Cup draw in Las Vegas

LONDON (AP) — Like with most people who visit Las Vegas, there were winners and losers.

The Spaniards were in a fiesta mood. The Irish were on their way to the bars to drown their sorrows.

It may have been a mind-boggling way to perform a World Cup draw, but Sunday's ceremony created delight and dismay around the world even though no one has played a game yet.

Brazil, co-favourite with Germany to win the trophy, was hardly ecstatic at having to face three tough opponents, Russia, Cameroon and Sweden.

"In other groups, you have an idea of who will qualify," head coach Carlos Alberto Parreira said. "But in ours it's hard to say."

"It's a good, strong group," said forward Bebeto, who plays in Spain for Deportivo La Coruna. "It's a good test to see if we can reach the title or not."

Then the Brazilians looked over at Argentina to see the 1990 runner up had to face Greece, Nigeria and Bulgaria, all comparative weaklings in World Cup terms.

"We can't complain because we get to face these teams," Argentina's largest-circulation daily Cronica said. "And, if it goes as we suppose, Argentina should advance without major problems."

The Nigerians aren't frightened of meeting Diego Maradona and the rest of the Argentine stars.

"People talk about Argentina, I don't think there's anything special about them," said Babayo Shehu, director general of Nigeria's National Sports Commission.

"This is the World Cup. Anything could happen... We are not going to be thinking about Argentina and forget that we need points from our other matches to qualify. I'm optimistic we will qualify."

Italy, rated third favourite, also is in a difficult group along with Ireland, Norway and Mexico.

"It has gone very badly as usual," coach Arrigo Sacchi said. "But difficult enterprises thrill me. He who has grand ideas must beat everyone. I am honoured."

Ireland has lost all its seven meetings with Italy, including in the quarterfinals in 1990.

"No luck of the draw for Irish," headlined the Irish Times. "It's New York, New York for unlucky Irish," the paper said, reflecting the fact that Ireland wanted its games to be staged at Boston to attract a large Irish following.

Mexico was upbeat about the prospect of a rare chance to tackle the Europeans.

"We aren't afraid to take on European teams such as Norway, Ireland and Italy. If we want to go all the way, we better than to take on the big ones at the start," said Mexico midfielder Garcia Aspe.

"Italy will be the team to beat."

Spain didn't mind being drawn in the same group as defending champion Germany because it was confident of beating the other two teams in the group, Bolivia and South Korea.

"OK," splashed the Madrid-based sports daily Marca in giant capital letters.

"None of the groups is easy but, yes, I can say I am happy," said Spanish national team coach Javier Clemente.

German coach Berti Vogts was in no mood to underestimate anyone.

"Remember, Bolivia beat Brazil and Uruguay. And we'll have problems with South Korea because we don't know their style of play," he said.

Team captain Lothar Matthaus agreed, "Bolivia and South Korea are blank pages for us. But they must have strengths or they wouldn't have qualified."

The Americans were seeded because they are to host the tournament and therefore avoided the likes of Germany, Brazil, Argentina, Italy and Belgium.

The down side of that was being drawn against three more teams they will struggle to beat, Switzerland, Colombia and Romania.

The United States clearly is the weakest of the seeded teams," said Switzerland's English coach, Roy Hodgson.

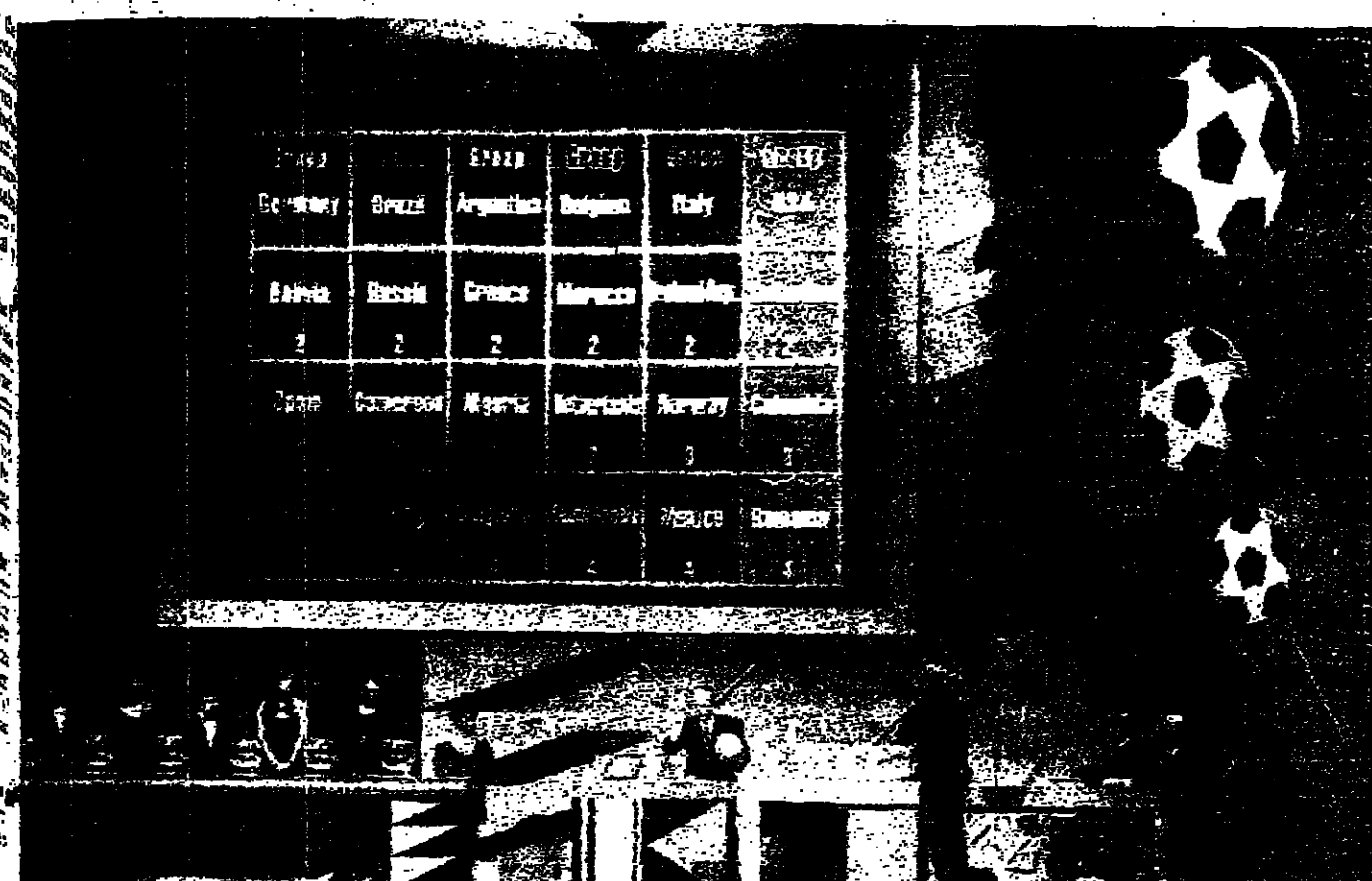
"I feel good about the opponents and about the venues, which should at least have an acceptable climate."

The talented Dutch team appear to have an easy route to the second stage, meeting neighbour Belgium and two teams with little World Cup pedigree, Morocco and Saudi Arabia.

"The big advantage is that we know Belgium very well but I know absolutely nothing about the other two teams," said Dutch coach Dick Advocaat, asked to stay on in charge of the team now that Johan Cruyff is not taking the job.

Soccer officials from around the globe dashed across the United States Monday to pick their training sites for the 1994 World Cup.

It wasn't exactly like the Los Angeles Dodgers heading off to Vero Beach, Fla., every February to start the season. In international soccer, everything is a production, with months spent analysing the most minute detail.



FIFA Secretary-General Joseph Blatter (centre) stands below the board showing the final group breakdown after the 1994 World Cup final draw in Las Vegas (AFP photo).

## Vogts keeps team under wraps before Mexico clash

MEXICO CITY (R) — German coach Berti Vogts is refusing to give away much about his line-up for Wednesday's clash with Mexico in the last friendly of the World Champions' 10-day tour.

Vogts's team face an awesome task at high altitude in front of more than 100,000 fanatical Mexicans at the Aztec Stadium, the venue for the World Cup finals in both 1970 and 1986.

The German coach does not want to give his opponents too much information in advance.

Asked by German journalists whether he could confirm rumours that he would play midfielder Andy Moeller in a out-and-out striker's role, Vogts said late Monday: "That has to be translated (into Spanish) for the Mexican journalists. So I can't answer that."

All the German squad are fit apart from reserve striker Bernd Hopsch, who has strained a hamstring. The game is the final test on a tour to the U.S. and Mexico which the Germans are using as key preparation for next year's World Cup in the United States.

Vogts admitted he planned to play VfB Stuttgart's Thomas Strunz on the right of midfield and rest Thomas Haessler who has proved himself in the two other matches of the tour — a 2-1 defeat by Argentina and a 3-0 victory over the U.S.

But apart from confirming that Bodo Illner would play his second match of the tour in goal and Bayern Munich's Christian Ziege would replace Andreas Brehme as expected on the left flank, Vogts kept everybody wondering.

The likelihood is that Vogts will make several changes from the team that struggled to break down a defensive American side in Stanford Stadium, California, Saturday.

Apart from Strunz and Ziege, Moeller is likely to move up to join Juergen Klinsmann in attack with former East German Matthias Sammer taking over his attacking role in midfield just behind the two strikers.

Forward Stefan Kuntz, who scored on his debut against the Americans, will probably start the match on the bench.

Bayern Munich's Thomas Helmer should return in defence.

Mexico have a strong team which is expected to include Spanish-based striker Hugo Sanchez and Luis Garcia. With the conditions in their favour, the Mexicans have a superb chance to deal the world champions only their second defeat of the year.

Vogts was concerned that the altitude problem would hinder the Germans: "Anybody who has been out for a jog here or gone up a few hundred steps knows what we are up against," he said.

Germany's tour of the United States and Mexico turned sour Monday when the players boycotted the media and Vogts made a fierce attack on the officials due to take charge of their last match in Mexico City.

All the German team, who are normally cordial with the press, refused to come to a scheduled news conference saying the criticism in the German media had been too harsh after their 3-0 victory over the United States.

Vogts said he had made an official protest to soccer's world governing body FIFA about Mexico's decision to appoint two Mexican linesmen for their friendly Wednesday.

"Don't you think it is hard for us having to read this criticism for months on end," German captain Lothar Matthaus told reporters sternly.

"You lot are trying to throw a spanner in the works of the whole team. That is putting our sporting success in danger and we are not going to let that happen."

Vogts was clearly annoyed by the affair which has suddenly upset morale in the German camp on a tour which he sees as vital preparation for next year's World Cup. His frustration spilled over into an attack on the Mexicans over the linesmen.

"The Mexicans have an almost perfect offside trap and I'm very disappointed that we have two Mexican linesmen for the game," the German coach said. "That's not fair."

"We have made a protest to FIFA and they have sent a fax to the Mexican Federation. We have had no answer yet... Looking at the (linesmen) situation and with their offside trap, all you have to say (to our team) is 'best of luck, lads'."

Acrimony seems to strike the German team whenever they visit Mexico. The last time they boycotted the media was at the 1986 World Cup after a German tabloid alleged some of the players had been out on a wild night on the town.

As soothing violins played in the background at an official reception at a central Mexico City hotel Monday evening, the players coolly turned their backs on reporters and refused to make any comments about Wednesday's game.

The German media was critical of the world champions' inability to break down a largely weak U.S. team in Stanford Stadium. Two of the goals came from set pieces.

The performance followed a 2-1 defeat by Argentina in the opening match of the 10-day tour in Miami, the world champions' first loss for a year.

Then the Brazilians looked over at Argentina to see the 1990 runner up had to face Greece, Nigeria and Bulgaria, all comparative weaklings in World Cup terms.

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## Compagnoni's French love affair blossoms

TIGNES, France (R) — Deborah Compagnoni's love affair with France blossomed Sunday as she grabbed her first World Cup giant slalom victory thanks to a storming second run.

The fourth major triumph of Compagnoni's career, all achieved on French pistes, was one of the toughest as the Italian skier had to overcome a considerable first leg lead set by Anita Wachter.

The Austrian overall World Cup leader, going for her third giant slalom victory of the season, looked poised for victory with a 0.44 second advantage over Compagnoni in the first run.

But Compagnoni gave everything she had on the second and Wachter made a series of errors on the middle section to yield to defeat by 0.24 seconds.

Olympic giant slalom champion Pernilla Wiberg of Sweden took third place, more than a second behind the Italian.

Compagnoni, criticised at home for failing to win races in Italy, has twice won World Cup super-G races in Morzine, France, and earned her greatest success at last year's Albertville Olympics when she won the super-G gold at Meribel.

The Olympics provided her with her most painful memory, too, as she fell in the giant slalom, 24 hours after her gold medal triumph, and sustained a serious knee injury which kept her out of action for months.

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## Ortlieb hopes for super-G win

LECH, Austria (R) — Local hero Patrick Ortlieb will be out to crown his first Alpine Skiing World Cup win last week by wrapping up a super-G victory Wednesday as a Christmas gift for his home town.

But the stocky 26-year-old, who learnt to ski in Lech's Arlberg Mountains, will have to put his local knowledge to best use to stave off a tough challenge from compatriot Guenther Mader and Olympic super-G champion Kjetil-

andre Aamodt of Norway.

Ortlieb is glowing with confidence after scoring the best result of his six-year World Cup career in a downhill race at Val Gardena in Italy last Saturday, a victory which quashed any suggestions that his Olympic downhill triumph in 1992 was a fluke.

Now the Austrian wants to make up for crashing out of the season's first super-G at Val D'Isere in France just over a week ago.

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Q.1—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠Q5 ♣A ♠J1065 ♠KQ84  
The bidding has proceeded:  
South West North East  
1 ♣ Pass 1 ♠ Pass  
2 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass  
What do you bid now?  
Q.2—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠8543 ♠A72 ♠6532 ♠85  
Partner opens the bidding with two no trump, showing 21-22 points.  
What action do you take?  
Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:  
♠A76 ♠K952 ♠5 ♠7653  
The bidding has proceeded:  
North East South West  
1 ♣ Pass 1 ♣ Pass  
2 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass  
What action do you take?  
Q.4—As South, vulnerable, you hold:  
♠A ♠J106 ♠A ♠QJ ♠KQ72  
The bidding has proceeded:  
South West North East  
1 ♣ Pass 1 ♣ Pass  
What do you bid now?  
Q.5—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠7 ♠AKQ109 ♠AQJ ♠J1085  
The bidding has proceeded:  
South West North East  
1 ♣ Pass 1 NT Pass  
What do you bid now?  
Q.6—As South, vulnerable, you hold:  
♠732 ♠AKQJ105 ♠KQ8 ♠5  
Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one no trump (16-18 points). What action do you take?

<p><b>PHILADELPHIA</b> Tel.: 634144 <b>STONE COLD</b> Starring: Brian Bosworth Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p><b>CONCORD</b> Tel.: 677420 <b>CONCORD "1"</b> Beauty and the Beast Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 <b>CONCORD "2"</b> Dancing Heavenly Bodies Shows: 3:15, 6, 8:15, 10:15 Hi America Play Shows: 8:30</p>	<p><b>PLAZA</b> Tel.: 699238 Ahmad Zaki and Mahmoud Hamideh in <b>AL BASHA (ARABIC)</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p><b>Nabil Al Mashal Theatre</b> Tel.: 675571 presents a play entitled: <b>Al Jim Nuron</b> A popular political comedy Actors: Abeer Issa, Daoud Jalal, Hassan Al Shahr, Foad Shomali In addition to other comedians Every night at 8:15 Tickets are sold all day</p>	<p><b>AHLAN THEATRE</b> Nabil &amp; Hisham's Tel.: 625153 The political comedy <b>WELCOME ARAB SUMMIT</b> Daily 8:30 p.m. The theatre closes Saturday and Sunday English synopsis available The Theatre will be closed from 25/12/93 till Monday 3/1/1994</p>
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## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Algeria to sign nuclear treaty.

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algeria is to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Foreign Minister Mohammad Salah Dymbri said Tuesday at the inauguration of the country's second experimental nuclear reactor. "Algeria is acting on the progress made in bilateral nuclear disarmament," said Mr. Dymbri, who called for "progress on the issue of security for non-nuclear states and a (nuclear) test ban." On the Middle East he called for "concrete and determined efforts to create, in this region, a zone free of weapons of mass destruction," which implied all nuclear facilities in the region should only have a civilian use, he said. Earlier education minister Ahmad Djebbar inaugurated the 'Ain Oussara 15-Megawatt nuclear plant, with Chinese help and which was to go on-stream on Tuesday two years after its inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

## Turkish minister snubs Iranian visitor

ANKARA (AFP) — Security and trade talks between Turkey and Iran wound up here Tuesday in the marked absence of Turkish Deputy Premier Murat Karayalcı, who refused to meet visiting Iranian first Vice-President Hassan Habibi. Sources close to the government said the deputy premier's boycott was sparked by the refusal of Mr. Habibi to lay a wreath, as foreign dignitaries generally do, at the mausoleum of Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey as a lay state. Mr. Habibi's talks with Prime Minister Tansu Ciller saw agreement on promoting regional development through "major steps" in security and trade. Bilateral ties have been cool of late because of Kurdish separatist unrest in south-east Turkey. The government here openly accuses Iran of supporting rebels of the Kurdish Labour Party and giving them refuge. The same charge is made against Syria. Mr. Habibi announced fresh measures at the border, and Ms. Ciller said she hoped the joint frontier region would "become one of peace."

## Banned Kurds lodge appeal in Germany

BONN (AFP) — Lawyers for the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) and 35 other Kurdish organisations banned in Germany a month ago said here Tuesday they were lodging an appeal with the federal administrative court to have the banning orders overturned. The ban ordered by Interior Minister Manfred Kanther was "the continuation of the Turkish state's policy of oppression," argued lawyer Carl Heydenreich. With the ban affecting many cultural associations suspected of serving as a cover for the PKK, "the whole cultural and political life" of Kurds in Germany was being killed off, he said.

## Mitterrand passes prostate cancer tests

PARIS (AFP) — Tests carried out on French President Francois Mitterrand, 77, for his prostate cancer showed "normal" results, a six-monthly medical bulletin said Tuesday. Ecographies and biological tests turned up no cancerous anomalies at local or general level, said the bulletin, signed by his personal physician, Claude Gubler.

## Israel, China agree long-term coal deal

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel is to buy coal from China under a long-term deal agreed last week, an Israeli energy official said Tuesday. He said the deal called for annual shipments of up to 120,000 tonnes of steam coal from China. Israel would pay China between \$2.5 million and \$3 million a year for the coal.

## UNITA rebels agree to return to peace talks

LUSAKA (R) — UNITA rebels said on Tuesday they would return to peace talks with the Angolan government after a U.N. military team reported on their charge that the Angolan government tried to kill their leader, Jonas Savimbi. "Today, we will start our negotiations and we will have a session with the mediators and observers to discuss the political agenda and tomorrow we will go into the plenary session," UNITA spokesman Jorge Valentim told reporters.

## Second Turk questioned in papal shooting

ROME (AFP) — Italian investigating magistrates carrying out a third probe into the 1981 shooting of Pope John Paul II by Turkish gunman Ali Agca have begun questioning a second Turkish suspect extradited from France last week. Judges Rosario Priore and Antonio Marini spent four hours at a Rome prison late Monday quizzing Orhan Celik, who admitted belonging to the same extreme right-wing group as Agca, the Grey Wolves, legal sources reported. Agca, serving a life sentence for the Saint Peter's Square attack which wounded the Pope, has alleged that Celik was his accomplice.

## Ethiopia-Sudan talks in Khartoum

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan and Ethiopia have begun high level talks on cooperation between the two neighbouring countries. The Ethiopian side is headed by Prime Minister Tannir Layne and the Sudanese by vice-president, Major-General Zubair Mohammad Salih, state-run television reported Monday night. The television said besides Gen. Zubeir, the Sudanese side to the talks which will end on Thursday includes the ministers in the energy, economic and services sectors besides politicians. Mr. Layne is accompanied by his ministers of foreign affairs, defence, finance, transport and communication, trade and investment, education and the commissioner of relief.

## Moroccan foreign minister visits Iran

NICOSIA (R) — Moroccan Foreign Minister Abdulatif Filali arrived in Tehran on Tuesday, the most senior official from Morocco to visit since the Islamic revolution in 1979, the Iranian news agency IRNA said. Mr. Filali said on arrival that during the two-day visit he would discuss bilateral ties and exchange views on other issues with Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati. IRNA added, Iran and Morocco resumed diplomatic ties in 1991 after a 10-year break. Relations were cut after King Hassan of Morocco took in his old friend the Shah of Iran, who had fled the 1979 revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

## Iran says 26 escape from Iraqi camp

NICOSIA (R) — Twenty-six Iranian civilians seized by Iraqi troops at the outset of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war escaped from an Iraqi camp last week and returned home, the Iranian news agency reported. It quoted the escapees, who crossed the border back into Iran on Monday, as saying the Iraqis were holding scores of Iranian families seized from border villages during the war. Hassan Sikkini said he and his family kidnapped from their village near the southern port of Khorramshahr and were held in several camps in Iraq during 13 years of captivity. He said the Iraqis gave them meagre food rations and for most of the time kept United Nations representatives from contacting them. IRNA said. The agency said the group of 26 escaped from Dojaila camp in Kermanshah province.

## Cyprus government denies shooting report

NICOSIA (R) — The government of Cyprus strongly denied Tuesday allegations by Turkish Cypriots that Greek Cypriot soldiers fired across the buffer zone dividing Nicosia. "These allegations, which have been dismissed by the United Nations peacekeeping force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), are all imaginary," spokesman Yiannakis Cassoulides told journalists. Turkey's Anatolia news agency said Greek Cypriots fired three rounds from Nicosia's central prison before dawn on Monday. Citing Turkish Cypriot officials, the agency also said that it was the fifth incident in the past few days. An UNFICYP spokesman told Reuters he was not aware of any shooting and that the force would investigate the reports.

## Pope due in Lebanon, also wants to visit Holy Land

VATICAN CITY (Agencies)

Pope John Paul II said Tuesday he will visit Lebanon in the spring and hopes also to visit the Holy Land.

The Pope announced his travel plans in a year-end message to cardinals.

The trip to Lebanon had already been reported by Lebanese officials and has been months in the planning stages with the return of relative calm following the 14-year civil war.

But a bombing Monday at the headquarters of Lebanon's largest Christian political party that killed at least two people and wounded 130 was a reminder that bitter rivalries persist.

In his speech to the cardinals, the Pope recalled the suffering of that "tormented land." He stressed that his trip would be strictly religious and pastoral and that he hoped to meet with Muslims and Christians.

He said he wanted to make another trip to the Middle East to visit the main sites linked to the Christian faith.

"The Pope has accepted in principle an invitation by Israeli officials, but such a trip is apparently linked to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel."

The Vatican on Monday confirmed that an historic agreement to forge such links will be signed Dec. 30 in occupied Jerusalem, although formal relations will still be several months away.

Pope Paul VI visited the Holy Land in 1964.

Diplomatic sources say the Pope and Israeli President Ezer Weizman will exchange personal envoys on Dec. 30. Full ambassadors will be appointed by the end of next April.

In his address, the Pope said he hoped his trip to Lebanon, expected to take place at the end of May or the beginning of June, could help the healing process begun three years ago after a devastating 15-year civil war.

"I hope, later, to be able to return to the Middle East, cradle of the three monotheistic religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam ...," Pope John Paul said Tuesday.

The 73-year-old pontiff said he wanted to visit "all the principal sites" connected to the origins of Christianity as well as those linked to Old Testament figures such as Abraham.

This indicated the trip the Pope has in mind may be a

wider one taking in other countries such as Egypt and Jordan.

The Pope gave no indication when that second trip to the Middle East would take place.

Lebanon's top Shiite Muslim fundamentalist cleric said on Tuesday the Vatican's plan to open full diplomatic ties with Israel was very dangerous and would strengthen the Jewish state and weaken the Arabs.

But Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah said Pope John Paul's scheduled visit to Lebanon next year would be welcome as long as he does not lock himself in internal Lebanese politics.

"We feel the danger of the Vatican's recognition of Israel ... it gives moral strength to Israel, putting indirect pressure on the Palestinian stand and weakening it," he said.

Sheikh Fadlallah told Reuters in an interview the Pope "appeared to have come under pressure to recognise Israel but that it was unacceptable to do so."

"The Vatican officially is the state of Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ was present, would he have submitted to pressure?" he asked.

"If he was present he would have confronted international oppressors and stood by the



Pope John Paul II

oppressed Palestinians in all of Palestine."

Sheikh Fadlallah, who holds the Shiite Muslim religious rank of Ayatollah, said the recognition would have negative repercussions on at least the feelings of Lebanese, Arabs and Muslims towards the Pope.

"We don't see the Pope's visit as an extraordinary event but we see it as a good thing ... it would give a moral boost to the Lebanese climate if it is conducted in a balanced way," Sheikh Fadlallah said.

He said the papal visit could create some internal problems as some Lebanese would try to capitalise on it to stir political and sectarian problems.

"We want the visit to be balanced ... because we don't want the Pope's visit to enter the small Lebanese political game," he said.

## Christmas spirit flagging in Bethlehem

BETHLEHEM. Occupied West Bank (Agencies) — The mayor of Bethlehem threatened Tuesday to cancel Christmas celebrations unless Israeli authorities backed down from a demand to remove a Palestinian flag outside city hall, municipal officials said.

The flag was raised at the municipality, on Manger Square, in the morning and Israel's military governor immediately ordered it taken down, the officials said.

"If they come and remove it, celebrations will be cancelled," a city official quoted Mayor Elias Freij as saying.

Mr. Freij convened an emergency meeting of the city council to discuss the dispute.

Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, has been under Israeli military occupation since the 1967 war. The city, joyful at Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace talks, resumed Christmas celebrations this year after a six-year break because of an uprising against Israeli occupation.

"We thought this year is a special year because of the peace agreement, so we decided to put up the Palestinian flag," said Jamal Salman, secretary of the Bethlehem municipality.

Rumours immediately swept the town that celebrations would be cancelled because of the dispute, but Mr. Salman said they would proceed under any circumstances.

Flying Palestinian flags was grounds for arrest before the Sept. 13 autonomy accord, and the Israeli military authorities that run the West Bank said the ban remains for public institutions.

"Yes there is a declaration of principles between the PLO and Israel, but the area is still under the control of the military governor," said Major Elise Shazar, spokeswoman for the military.

Meanwhile the PLO, testing its wings despite the delay in implementing the autonomy accord, declared Christmas a national holiday for both Christians and Muslims.

"We the sons of the national movements, decided to transform this occasion into an extraordinary national event. We call on boy scouts to raise Palestinian flags and to play national music to make the festivities a symbol for our struggle for independence," said a statement signed by the PLO's mainstream Fateh and two other factions.

On Tuesday shopkeepers in Bethlehem observed a general strike called by the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in solidarity with Palestinians held in Israeli prisons.

In Manger Square dozens of armed Israeli soldiers were busy building a stage to be used by church choirs. The square outside the Church of the Nativity has frequently been the site of clashes between Palestinians and Israeli troops.

## Clinton aide's son charged with drug sale

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (R) — The son of U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders, who earlier this month praised the idea of legalising drugs, has been charged with selling cocaine to an undercover officer, police said Monday. Kevin Elders, 28, "has been charged with one count of delivery of cocaine," said Lieutenant Charles Holladay of the Little Rock Police Department. If convicted on the charge, Kevin could serve 40 years to life in prison. Holladay told Reuters. A warrant for Elders' arrest was issued last week but he waited until Monday to turn himself in, police said. He was fingerprinted, photographed and released on a \$2,500 bond after being ordered to appear for a hearing on Feb. 22 in Little Rock Municipal Court. Lt. Holladay said. The police said Elders was charged with selling one-eighth of an ounce (3.5 grams) of cocaine to an undercover police officer for \$275 in cash. In interviews over the weekend, he had speculated that police were seeking his arrest to embarrass his mother politically. Police denied this. "He sold cocaine to an undercover officer who did not know who he was. He received \$275 for that drug. It had nothing to do with politics," Lt. Holladay said.

## NAACP comes to aid of Jackson

LOS ANGELES (R) — The NAACP came to the aid of beleaguered pop superstar Michael Jackson, roundly criticizing press coverage of his misfortunes. Jackson has been accused in a civil lawsuit of sexually molesting a 13-year-old boy, and police are investigating the allegations to determine if criminal charges should be brought against the 35-year-old singer. Jackson recently returned to his Neverland Valley estate near Santa Barbara, about 240 kilometres north of Los Angeles, after receiving treatment for an addiction to painkilling drugs at an undisclosed location in Europe. Jackson admitted his addiction in a videotaped statement after abruptly cancelling his world concert tour while in Mexico City and flying to Europe with his close friend Elizabeth Taylor. Jackson's woes have made headlines around the world. On Monday, Shannon Reeves, the western region director of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), accused the press of trying to convict the entertainer before he has had his day in court. "We understand that the allegations facing Michael Jackson are serious. However, the NAACP western region takes no position on Mr. Jackson's innocence or guilt in this matter. Our primary concern is that Mr. Jackson is being tried and convicted in the press," the civil rights leader told a news conference. He said that if Jackson was criminally charged, he would be tried "in a court room not a newsroom," by an elected or appointed judge "and not by a television news anchorman."

## Trump weds Maples

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Real estate magnate and casino operator Donald Trump married actress Maria Maples in a lavish Plaza Hotel ceremony Monday night attended by 1,000 guests including celebrities from the worlds of film, music, sports and politics. Trump, 47, announced just eight days ago that he would marry Maples, 29, a dancer and singer and the mother of their 9-week-old daughter Tiffany. Trump, dressed in a black tuxedo, led his radiant new wife down the stairs of the hotel's grand ballroom after the ceremony and posed playfully for photographers, kissing her on the lips as he dipped her close to the ground. Maples wore a flowing white gown by Carolina Herrera, with a \$2 million 350-diamond tucked into her bridal veil. The tiera was lent for the evening by jeweller Harry Winston. Asked if the couple planned to have more children, Maples, clutching a bouquet of purple flowers, merely rolled her eyes, while Trump nodded and said, "Probably so." "It's wonderful, it was just a relief," said Trump, who has three young children from his first wife Ivana. "It's been a memorable evening."

## Israel and PLO meet again

(Continued from page 1)

— Israelis and other non-Palestinians would not be subject to Palestinian control.

Israel rejected a PLO request for an international presence at the border crossings.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin indirectly confirmed the compromise. He spoke of a Palestinian presence at border crossings and suggested Israel might compromise on the size of the Jericho district.

"It's a question of coordinating the Palestinian presence at border crossings," Mr. Rabin told reporters "after a parliamentary foreign affairs and defence committee meeting."

Israel must bar entry to those who can threaten Israeli security and to Palestinians who under Israeli law are not allowed to resettle in their homeland, said Mr. Rabin, who is also defence minister.

Foreign Minister Peres last week also spoke of a symbolic Palestinian presence at the borders, but the PLO has asked to at least have joint control of the crossings.

Mr. Rabin said during the meeting that Israel would not allow the Jericho region to include the Almag and Elisha settlements, or stretch as far as the Dead Sea and the Jordan Valley, a parliamentary source said.

He thus suggested that Israel could broaden its initial plan for Jericho by several dozen kilometres of desert between these areas, the source said.

Israeli officials said Mr. Rabin has told Mr. Peres to

offer a series of "national" gestures such as the right to a Palestinian flag, national anthem and stamps.

Mr. Arafat had insisted on a range of what Israel terms "signs of sovereignty" when he met Mr. Rabin in a bid to break the deadlock in Cairo on Dec. 12, but the prime minister refused.

The premier met his delegation Tuesday morning and ruled out any concessions on "external security," Israel Radio reported.

"Israel will keep hold of everything linked to security needs along the borders. Once this is agreed there is room for manoeuvre," a senior official who attended the briefing said.

Norway's Deputy Foreign Minister Jan Egeland said Monday Israel and the PLO were close to agreement on the size of a Palestinian police force that will replace Israeli soldiers in the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

Some 50 delegates from 16 countries, including Russia and the United States, met in Oslo to discuss the financing and the structure of the police force, a key element of the autonomy.

The conference turned out to be more focused on concrete measures than the participants had expected," Mr. Egeland told the media.

"In terms of numbers there is very little that divides the positions of the two parties, he added.

Western donor countries and the Middle East states involved in the peace process agreed to meet in Paris in the second half of January to continue the talks.

## Resignations hit Islamic front

(Continued from page 1)

bers only a few days before our Shura elections. Their membership applications will be studied and decided upon in due time," said the IAF statement.

"The resignation of executive committee members three days before (the panel) is legally obliged to dissolve itself is meaningless," said the statement. "Statements made at the meeting were provocative but not insulting," as Mr. Abu Ghanimeh had told the press on Monday.

"We regret the publication of internal IAF differences in the press. It is against party regulations and Islamic morals to air differences of opinion in a public forum rather than in our party meetings," added the statement referring to the six members who distributed a statement to the press Monday night announcing their resignation.

The applications of the new would-be members, said the statement, had "not gone through the proper channels" and thus the committee would not consider the applications at this stage.

But Mr. Abu Ghanimeh said the holding of Shura elections before the applicants' membership was considered would be "undemocratic" and a "scandal."

"If elections are held before this dilemma is resolved more resignations follow," he warned.

"Since the elections will be held on Friday, our move was

more symbolic than strategic; it did not signal a rift," said Deputy Hamman Said, one of the six executive committee members who resigned.

Mr. Said one of 16 IAF members in the Lower House of parliament said: "There are differences of opinion but it has not come to 'serious resignations'; this is like a 'trial resignation'." It was an apparent attempt to play down a total rupture within the party at this stage.

The IAF executive committee members who resigned were former Minister of Health Kandil Shaker, deputies Said and Ahmad Kofahi, Ali Otoum, Rajeh Kurdi and Mr. Ghanimeh. They represent the "old school" of the Muslim Brotherhood that "limits its accommodation with the existing order," said a source close to the IAF.

"The new IAF leadership is too lax in opposing the peace process," said one source.

The "rejectionists" were voted down when they proposed boycotting the election in protest over the one-person, one-vote amendment introduced to the Election Law this summer.

Sources close to the IAF executive committee said Tuesday that three other members of the committee could resign prior to the holding of the last meeting of the present Shura on Thursday.

"If demands to expand IAF ranks are not met by the existing leadership, then at least three more people could resign," said the source.

## 500 dead because of sanctions — Libya

TRIPOLI (Agencies) — Almost 500 people, including 200 babies, have died because of the U.N. sanction imposed on Libya in April 1992, an official report said here Tuesday.

The report was issued on the fifth anniversary of the Pan Am plane bombing over the Scottish village of Lockerbie.

The U.N. air traffic embargo was the cause of many deaths because it complicates the treatment abroad of seriously ill or injured people and delays the import of medicine, the report said.

It said around 8,600 people were being deprived of urgent medical care outside Libya.

The sanctions have also pushed foreign workers to quit their jobs in Libya, said the report. On average, around 100 employees were deserting the health sector each month.

The sanctions, which ban air travel to and from Libya, have cost Libyan carriers more than \$510 million, according to the report.

Agricultural output has fallen by 44 per cent, with \$234 million in lost earnings because of delays in imports of plants, fertilizers and other products to fight pests.

Apart from the air embargo, the U.N. Security Council in April 1992 also imposed diplomatic and arms sanctions.

On Dec. 1, the Security Council tightened the sanctions, banning some equipment used in the oil industry, Libya's main source of revenue, and freezing part of its assets abroad.

The sanctions are aimed at forcing Libya into handing over two suspects wanted in the West for the Lockerbie bombing of Dec. 21, 1988 that

cost 270 lives.

British relatives of the victims of the blast asked Prime Minister John Major on Tuesday to order an inquiry into the attack.

In a letter to the Guardian newspaper, one of the relatives, Martin Cadman, renewed an appeal made a year ago to Mr. Major to launch a public inquiry into the bombing of Flight 103.

Mr. Cadman, whose son was on the plane, said no substantial progress had been made towards establishing who planted the bomb on the Boeing 747.

He accused the government of foot-dragging and said relatives had been told some time ago by Cecil Parkinson, a former transport minister, that an inquiry had been refused "at the highest level."

Mr. Cadman asked Mr. Major: "Can you tell us what is your problem? 270 people were killed in this bizarre tragedy. The government either knows all it needs to know and it will not tell (as a member of the U.S. presidential commission told one of us) or does not know and does not want to know, which is unbelievable."

Mr. Major's office had no immediate comment on the letter.

But British media reports said this week Syria could have been involved.

The Sunday Times newspaper and the British Broadcasting Corporation said electronic timers of the type used in the bombing could have found their way to Syrian-based guerrillas through the East German Stasi security police (see page 2).

## New York FBI chief suspended for remarks on bombing trial

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Louis Freeh suspended the top FBI agent in New York City for talking in a television interview about the World Trade Centre bombing while the trial is going on, the bureau said Tuesday.

James Fox, the assistant director in charge of the New York office, was suspended Dec. 10 for comments made on the Dec. 4 broadcast of "11 News Close-up" on television station WPIX, an FBI official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

In the broadcast interview, Mr. Fox responded to a question about reports that FBI informant Emad Salem gave the FBI information prior to the World Trade Centre bombing on Feb. 26.

"He (Salem) gave us nothing. No one gave us anything," Mr. Fox was quoted by Newsday as saying. "If we had information, we would have prevented the bombing."

Mr. Fox became an agent in 1962 and has headed the New York office for six years. He had been scheduled to retire Jan. 3, the FBI said.

"Director Freeh made the decision to place Assistant Director Fox on administrative leave with pay until his retirement in January," FBI spokesman John Collingwood said Tuesday, reading an official statement.

"He did so after carefully reviewing inappropriate public comments Fox made about pending prosecution," he said, adding that he was "not at liberty to say" how Mr. Freeh became aware of Mr. Fox's comments.

The suspension was reported first by New York Newsday in Tuesday's editions.

"Our policy is not to talk about pending cases, particularly when it's still at trial," said the FBI official.

Taped conversations

Transcripts of conversations between a defendant in the World Trade Centre bombing case and a man prosecutors say is a fugitive in the attack likely will be played for a jury.

The lawyer for Ahmad Ajaj, 27, of Houston urged Judge Kevin Duffy to reject the tapes because prosecutors did not turn them over to the defence before the Sept. 14 start of the trial. Ajaj is one of four people on trial in the blast.

Mr. Duffy said Monday he was inclined to let the jury read transcripts of the conversations. He said he would issue a

ruling on Tuesday.

During a hearing Monday, Mr. Campriello objected to the jail house conversations between Mr. Ajaj and Ramzi Yousef, 26, the fugitive.

The government says the talks were taped between 1992 and last April, when Mr. Yousef visited Mr. Ajaj in jail.

The two came to the United States together on Sept. 1, 1992, but Mr. Ajaj was stopped by U.S. customs agents because he carried a false passport.

He was in jail from then through Feb. 26, when the bomb exploded at the trade centre, killing six people and injuring more than 1,000. Mr. Yousef, who fled the United States the day of the explosion, has been accused of ordering chemicals to make the bomb.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Gilmore Childers says Mr. Ajaj arrived in this country with the formula for the bomb, including manuals, videotapes and cassette tapes.

"The government doesn't have a legally sufficient case against Mr. Ajaj, and what they are trying to do is, to take an innuendo there and parlay that into evidence against him," Mr. Campriello told Mr. Duffy on a day when the jury was not in court.